

Eric Mandat (B. 1957): A Multiphonic Meditation on a  
Composer, Clarinetist and Teacher

by

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## ABSTRACT

Examples of new or extended clarinet techniques first appeared early in the twentieth century. By the 1960s, composers and performers began to drastically augment standard clarinet technique, by experimenting with multiphonics and microtones. Subsequently, clarinetists-teachers William O. Smith, Gerard Errante, Ronald Caravan, and others further pushed the limits of sound through their compositions for clarinet. This study explores the important contributions of clarinetist-teacher-composer Eric Mandat to the clarinet repertoire, and presents readers with a detailed biography of Mandat.

Additionally, this research paper provides insights into Eric Mandat's instinctive approach to life and considers how this *modus operandi* translates into success as a composer, as a clarinetist, and as a teacher. Interviews with Eric Mandat comprise the basis for this document; these are supplemented by his writings, articles about Mandat, reviews of his music, and interviews with select colleagues and students. This is the first document to examine Eric Mandat's history and development as a composer, teacher and clarinetist.

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## PREFACE

When I first visited Arizona State University to audition for Bob Spring's clarinet studio, one of his clarinet students excitedly played for me a recording by Eric Mandat. The music was unlike any I had ever heard, and it made the same impact on me that it had already made on Bob Spring's other students. His use of extended techniques inspired me to explore "Clarinet Extended Techniques" as a doctoral paper topic. During my initial research, I discovered that extended techniques in general did not interest me as much as how Eric Mandat employed extended techniques. This discovery took some time, however, as this is my tenth year working on this relatively short document.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Eric P. Mandat (b. 1957) is a leading composer and performer of contemporary clarinet music.<sup>1</sup> While continuing in the tradition of clarinetist-composers such as William O. Smith and Ronald Caravan, Mandat has created contemporary music that is readily accessible for listeners. Despite unfamiliar sounds that explore the far reaches of the clarinet's technical possibilities, even casual listeners without previous exposure to new music often find themselves quickly drawn to Mandat's inventive compositions. Whether the mood is meditative, playful or energetic, Mandat never fails to create a compelling auditory (and frequently visually-oriented) narrative.

Currently Professor of Music and Distinguished Scholar at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Eric Mandat enjoys notable success as a teacher and as a performer, in addition to his accomplishments as a composer. He has released, to wide acclaim, recordings as a solo artist, as well as with the Transatlantic Trio (a classical ensemble) and with the Tone Road Ramblers (a sextet specializing in improvisational and experimental music); he also performs frequently as a solo artist with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's MusicNOW Series. Past students of his include Sean Osborn, the youngest clarinetist to win a position in the Metropolitan Opera, and well-known concert recitalist Michael Norsworthy.

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<sup>1</sup> *Eric Mandat*, [http://www.enotes.com/topic/Eric\\_Mandat](http://www.enotes.com/topic/Eric_Mandat) (accessed April 13, 2012).

Eric Mandat is a composer whose works successfully bridge the gap between traditional and new music. By incorporating new techniques and sounds into an overall sound scheme, his music appeals even to listeners who usually prefer traditional music. His organic and individualized approach to composition has inspired music reviewers to make glowing statements concerning his place in the clarinet world. In a review of *The Extended Clarinet*<sup>2</sup> for *The Clarinet*, Linda Pierce made the following assertion about Mandat's *Folk Songs*: "A composition of this caliber will most likely enter the performance repertoire as the representative piece of the decade!"<sup>3</sup> In a later review for the same publication, Michele Gingras submitted: "In one word, *The Extended Clarinet* is astonishing. Eric Mandat's process of writing and playing is bound to leave any listener in awe."<sup>4</sup> Even reviewer Steven E. Ritter, known for his more conservative viewpoint, admits, "[Mandat's] pieces use these techniques in a far more user-friendly manner than I have heard before."<sup>5</sup>

The inclusion of Eric Mandat's work in a variety of documents bolsters the strength of his output in the clarinet literature. David Odom includes Mandat's composition *Tricolor Capers* in a catalog of compositions for unaccompanied clarinet: "The clarinetist-composer Eric Mandat is one of the leading figures in

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<sup>2</sup>. Eric Mandat, *The Extended Clarinet*, Advance Recordings FGCD-32, 1991, compact disc.

<sup>3</sup>. Linda Pierce, "Compact Disc Reviews: The Extended Clarinet." *The Clarinet* 17, no. 2 (1990): 63.

<sup>4</sup>. Michelle Gingras, "Compact Disc Reviews: The Extended Clarinet.," *The Clarinet* 20, no. 3 (1993): 46.

<sup>5</sup>. Steven E. Ritter, "Collections: "American Spirit"," *American Record Guide* 67, no. 3 (May/June 2004): 199.

the field of new and extended techniques...*Tricolor Capers* has become a relatively standard work in the unaccompanied clarinet repertoire. ”<sup>6</sup> Dennis Polkow writes in the *Chicago Reader*: “Mandat is exploring new worlds for the clarinet with a unique combination of virtuosity and a creative use of multiphonics. But the interesting thing about Mandat isn't so much his bag of tricks as how he uses them to create highly personal and expressive compositions that, despite their being written for a solo instrument, have dense textures and are loaded with musical meaning.”<sup>7</sup> Michael Cameron and Raymond Tuttle wrote in *Fanfare* magazine that “Mandat was not the first to explore extended clarinet techniques and bring non-Western influences to his instrument, but few (if any) have synthesized these strains in such a controlled and compelling way.”<sup>8</sup> Critics agree that Mandat has successfully captured relatable music despite his reliance on extended techniques within his compositions.

Eric Mandat is featured in a number of journal, magazine, and website articles; additionally, three doctoral papers discuss his compositional process and analyze specific works. John Masserini’s dissertation from 1999, “The Compositional Techniques of Eric Mandat and an Analysis of Tricolor Capers

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<sup>6</sup>. David H. Odom, "A Catalog of Compositions for Unaccompanied Clarinet Published between 1978 and 1982, with an Annotated Bibliography of Selected Works" (DMA diss., Florida State University, 2005), 63.

<sup>7</sup>. Dennis Polkow, “Eric Mandat,” *The Chicago Reader*, April 20, 1989.

<sup>8</sup>. Michael Cameron and Raymond Tuttle, “Collections - MANDAT: Folk Songs1/UENO: I Screamed at the Sea Until Nodes Swelled Up, Then My Voice Became the Resonant Noise of the Sea2/SIERRA: 5 Bocetos3/MCGOWAN: Los Duo4/YI: Monologue5/MAYER: Raga Music6/FELDER: Apache Clown Dance7,” *Fanfare - the Magazine for Serious Record Collectors* 34, no. 1 (September 2010): 519.



and Folk Songs,”<sup>9</sup> discusses Mandat’s compositional style and includes an in-depth theoretical analyses of two works. Gregory Oakes completed a doctoral thesis focused on two compositions by Mandat titled “Eric Mandat’s Style and Compositional Process for Solo Clarinet Music” in 2004.<sup>10</sup> Finally, Suzanne Crookshank examined three chamber works by Mandat in her 2007 doctoral thesis titled *Selected Chamber Music by the Clarinetist/Composer Eric Mandat: A Performer’s Perspective*.<sup>11</sup>

A 2002 published interview with Eric Mandat addressed influences such as William O. Smith on Mandat’s work as a composer and clarinetist.<sup>12</sup> Online articles by Bonnie Marx<sup>13</sup> and Ann Starr<sup>14</sup> helped to provide information about his life and history. Eric Mandat’s own writings reveal important information about his life and work. In addition to a number of reviews he wrote for *The Clarinet* on the recordings of fellow clarinetists, Mandat also contributed to the same publication an article on teaching concepts (“Expanding timbral: flexibility

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<sup>9</sup>. John Patrick Masserini, *The Compositional Techniques of Eric Mandat and an Analysis of Tricolor Capers and Folk Songs* (DMA diss., Michigan State University, 1999).

<sup>10</sup>. Gregory Oakes, *Eric Mandat’s Style and Compositional Process for Solo Clarinet Music* (DMA thesis, University of Colorado, 2004).

<sup>11</sup>. Suzanne Crookshank, "Selected Chamber Music by the Clarinetist/Composer Eric Mandat: A Performer's Perspective" (DMA thesis, University of Illinois at Urbana, 2007).

<sup>12</sup>. Deborah Bish, “In the Mind of Mandat,” *The Clarinet* 29, no. 3 (June 2002).

<sup>13</sup>. Bonnie Marx, *SIUC clarinetist expands instrument’s possibilities* (Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 2001), <http://news.siu.edu/news/March01/032701b0025.html> (accessed August 12, 2011).

<sup>14</sup>. Ann Starr, *Off the Charts: The Tone Road Ramblers at Work* (University of Illinois at Urbana, 2007), <http://www.ann-starr.com/Off%20the%20Charts.pdf> (accessed August 3, 2011).

through multiphonics”),<sup>15</sup> a guide for clarinetists approaching a piece by Shulamit Ran (“Master class: *For an Actor: Monologue for Clarinet* (in A) by Shulamit Ran”),<sup>16</sup> and a profile of an orchestral clarinet section (“The clarinetists of the Latvian Philharmonia Orchestra”).<sup>17</sup> Score notes for *Folk Songs* (1986),<sup>18</sup> *The Jungle* (1989),<sup>19</sup> *Ritual* (2000),<sup>20</sup> *Black Swirls*(2004)<sup>21</sup> and *Rrowzer!*(2005)<sup>22</sup> provide additional insight into the mind of Mandat, as do the liner notes for *The Extended Clarinet*<sup>23</sup> and *Black Swirls*.<sup>24</sup>

Today, many solo clarinet works in the standard repertoire utilize extended techniques, and most works by Eric Mandat uses extended techniques to some extent. Philip Rehfeldt’s *New Directions for Clarinet* was updated in 1994 and again in 2002 from its original 1977 edition, and it remains one of the most

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<sup>15</sup>. Eric Mandat, “Expanding Timbral: Flexibility Through Multiphonics,” *The Clarinet* 16, no. 3 (1989).

<sup>16</sup>. Eric Mandat, “Master Class: For an Actor: Monologue for Clarinet (in A) by Shulamit Ran,” *The Clarinet* 32, no. 3 (2005).

<sup>17</sup>. Eric Mandat, “The Clarinetists of the Latvian Philharmonia Orchestra,” *The Clarinet* 20, no. 3 (1993).

<sup>18</sup>. Eric Mandat, *Folk Songs* (Carbondale, IL: Cirrus Music, 1986).

<sup>19</sup>. Eric Mandat, *The Jungle* (Carbondale, IL: Cirrus Music, 1989).

<sup>20</sup>. Eric Mandat, *Ritual* (Carbondale, IL: Cirrus Music, 2000).

<sup>21</sup>. Eric Mandat, *Black Swirls* (Carbondale, IL: Cirrus Music, 2004).

<sup>22</sup>. Eric Mandat, *Rrowzer!* (Carbondale, Illinois: Cirrus Music, 2005).

<sup>23</sup>. Eric Mandat, *The Extended Clarinet*, Advance Recordings FGCD-32, 1991, compact disc.

<sup>24</sup>. Eric Mandat, *Black Swirls*, Cirrus Music CMCD 001, 2007, compact disc.

widely circulated books on the topic.<sup>25</sup> Eric Mandat provided a chart of his own multiphonic fingerings for Rehfeldt's 1994 and 2002 editions.

This paper will focus on Eric Mandat's life as it relates to the areas of composition, teaching and performance. The purpose of this paper is to examine the life of Eric Mandat and the contributions he has made to the clarinet repertoire. It serves to guide the reader toward an understanding of how Eric Mandat's unguarded approach to life translates to his success as a composer, as a clarinetist and as a teacher. This is the first biography written about Eric Mandat, and will attempt to represent Eric Mandat's own voice by incorporating many direct quotes from interviews with Mandat and from his own writings.

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<sup>25</sup> Philip Rehfeldt, *New Directions for Clarinet*, 2d ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

## CHAPTER 2

### EARLY LIFE AND STUDIES

Eric Paul Mandat was drawn to the clarinet, with its great range and technical capacity, from a very young age. Born in Denver, Colorado on December 16, 1957, it was not long before the clarinet made its first appearance in his life. Listening to "The Instruments of the Orchestra" with his brother at the age of three provided the first spark of interest in the instrument that would occupy much of his life, and choosing the clarinet when he joined the band at age eight cemented the partnership. Although Mandat's dad occasionally played the accordion and his mother sometimes played piano, neither of his parents was particularly musically inclined and his siblings did not pursue music.<sup>26</sup>

Private clarinet lessons with a young clarinetist from the Colorado Philharmonic Orchestra (now known as the National Repertory Orchestra) led quickly to studies with Richard Joiner, who then served as principal clarinetist for the Denver Symphony. One might assume that young Mandat must have demonstrated particular promise on the clarinet to be taking lessons with a respected symphony player at such a young age. This may indeed have been the case, but one would never know from Mandat, who recalled that Joiner "taught a lot of young kids. He was great that way - that was the thing he liked to do. To my

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<sup>26</sup>. Eric Mandat, <emandat@siu.edu>, " RE: Questions and past Interview attached," private e-mail message to Rebecca d'Alessio, 22 September 2008.

knowledge it wasn't because I was good or anything, it was because my parents called him and he said yes."<sup>27</sup>

Mandat remembers Richard Joiner during that time as a teacher who was very kind and patient, someone who would never give up on a student. Mandat's playful approach to music can at least partially be traced back to Joiner's early influence: "I remember one time in particular he came down for the lesson into his little basement studio and he was bouncing all around and he said, 'wow, the orchestra gets to play the Barber of Seville Overture again this week,' and you know he must have played it a hundred times, but he was so excited...And I thought, man, that's where it's at to be able to play a piece a hundred times and still get excited like it was your very first time ever having the chance to play that." Joiner's attitude towards music influenced not only Eric Mandat's playing, but also his teaching: "That made such an impact on me that I wanted to do my best to try and show other students how much I enjoyed doing what I was doing. That influenced me a lot...I try to keep that in mind when I'm teaching."<sup>28</sup> Mandat also gives Dick Joiner credit for introducing him to new music:

My interest in new music came first from Richard Joiner. During my last couple of years in high school he had me sightread a lot of music, particularly solo pieces he had been given as samples. Some of them were really sort of surprising new music pieces. The first piece that I remember that used any kind of non-conventional techniques was Gene Saucier's *Three Pieces for Clarinet*. It had a couple of microtones, stopped-tonguing effects, and jazz influences. I really enjoyed that piece a lot.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>. Eric Mandat, interview by author, minidisc recording, Champaign, IL, 12 April 2007.

<sup>28</sup>. Eric Mandat, interview by author, minidisc recording, Champaign, IL, 12 April 2007.

<sup>29</sup>. Bish, "In the Mind of Mandat," 60.

A high school audition helped shape Eric's future in the area of new music. In addition to his experience with Saucier's piece, Mandat revealed in an interview, "The other big new music event that got me interested [in non-conventional techniques] while I was still in high school was when I auditioned for the Colorado All-State Orchestra. We had to play for Phil Aaholm, the clarinet professor at the University of Colorado. After we were done with the audition, he took us all into a room and played the Martino *B.A.B.B.I.T.T.* for us. That was really impressive to me. I think those were the first two big moments that got me interested in extended techniques on the clarinet."<sup>30</sup>

Although Mandat was always strongly drawn to music, it was a trip to Europe that helped him decide to pursue music as a career:

When I was in high school, the summer between my junior and senior years, I played with a group called America's Youth in Concert. It was just one of those groups that pours musicians in – band musicians, choir musicians, orchestra musicians – and then tours them around Europe. It was a great experience for me. We spent time in Rome, Florence, Venice, Austria, Geneva, Paris, London and New York. It was a month long. It was great! That's what led me to decide I wanted to major in music.<sup>31</sup>

While some musicians love to make music but tend to shy away from performing, this was not the case with Mandat. Performing in front of audiences was something he loved, and the clarinet allowed Mandat to do that.<sup>32</sup> "I always enjoyed being on stage, I always had a good time doing acting. I was in lots of plays and musicals in junior high and high school and I considered [theater] as a

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<sup>30</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>. Eric Mandat, interview by author, Champaign.

<sup>32</sup>. Marx, *SIUC Clarinetist Expands Instrument's Possibilities*.

major pretty strongly."<sup>33</sup> Mandat also performed with a rock band for a short while in high school, in which he sang and played both saxophone and flute.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>. Eric Mandat, interview by author, Champaign.

<sup>34</sup>. Ibid.

## CHAPTER 3

### ACADEMIA: THE PATH FROM STUDENT TO PROFESSOR

Mandat traveled to the University of North Texas (then known as North Texas State University) for his bachelor's degree in music. There he studied clarinet with Lee Gibson, whose friendship with Richard Joiner dated back to their undergraduate studies at Eastman School of Music. North Texas was and still is a very large school of music with a wide variety of musical offerings, where students can find themselves lost in the crowd. Mandat found his niche when he realized that a large number of student composers were regularly searching for players to perform their new music, which Mandat was more than willing to do.<sup>35</sup>

One of the few performers who student composers could rely on at NTSU was Ed Snider, a clarinet student ahead of Mandat in school. Mandat followed Snyder's example of experimenting with new sounds and began to organize his own recitals, performing new works by composition students along with contemporary works he came across on his own. The process of discovering a piece for the first time thrilled Mandat, and he was forced to hone his skills in interpretation without the safety net of previous recordings.<sup>36</sup>

Mandat enjoyed the performance spotlight that new music provided. In an interview, Mandat described how he became involved with extended techniques and began experimenting with composition:

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<sup>35</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>. Bish, "In the Mind of Mandat," 60.



Ed Snyder was playing some pieces with multiphonics, and I got involved working with Ed specifically on Bill Smith's *Variants*, which was the first really serious multiphonic piece that I was working on as an undergraduate. I got kind of hooked from there and started searching for more and more music, and found a lot of music to play, but not a lot of it was really interesting to me, and that's when I started trying to do some of my own things.<sup>37</sup>

During that same time, Mandat took "Comprehensive Musicianship" with Martin Mailman. The course covered music organization and included small assignments in composition. Mailman was very supportive of experimentation in music, which proved helpful for Mandat. Although the pieces Mandat experimented with at NTSU did not remain in his oeuvre, this early composition phase provided an important foundation for what would later come.

Lee Gibson helped Mandat work on pieces for the recitals that Mandat organized, but he didn't help choose the repertoire. Gibson's instruction influenced Mandat's own clarinet teaching: "he was just the master of sub-phrasing and parsing out a phrase to its tiniest degree; making a note move two or three directions, and it was so valuable to me. It wasn't really 'turn on the faucet, turn off the faucet.' It was all about movement and shape, and shapes within shapes...that kind of layering of phrases was really exciting to me. I wanted to try to do that and try to help students understand how we can move our air to make a more married kind of sound."<sup>38</sup> This microscopic approach to phrase layering and shaping would later factor into the subtly transformational melodies found in Mandat's compositions.

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<sup>37</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>. Eric Mandat, interview by author, Champaign.

While studying at NTSU, Eric met his future wife, Olise Moe. Olise served as a graduate assistant in the flute studio and played in the Wind Ensemble with Eric. They became close as they carpoled every Saturday to a music store in Denton, Texas, where they both taught private music lessons. They married on May 19, 1979 in Denton.<sup>39</sup> Olise supported Eric in his academic pursuits, traveling with him first to New Haven, where Eric earned his Master's degree in music, and then to Carbondale, where Eric has taught since 1981. She now manages the office for the Geography Department at Southern Illinois University.

While attending Yale, Mandat studied clarinet with Keith Wilson. From Wilson, Mandat learned two lasting lessons: that musical success isn't tied solely to work in the practice room; and that loyalty and commitment to an institution matters.

Up until that time that's what I thought was going to help me to break into the professional world, practice, practice, practice. But there was much more than that – it was connecting with other people, learning to play chamber music together with people who you liked...So it was all about being visible as much as it was being sequestered, and I think that was a big change for me from the way I had been thinking. I was always fairly gregarious, so that wasn't difficult, it was just a completely different way of thinking about how to approach my instrument and how to get to the next level. The other thing that really stuck with me is his loyalty to his institution, because he went to every single concert, it seemed. I don't think there was a concert I attended at Yale that he wasn't at – he was at a whole lot more than I was, and I went to most of them. He was always there, every little student performance, every faculty performance, every big ensemble performance...Keith Wilson could be counted on to be there and to really care about his school. I wanted to make sure that I felt that way about wherever I was.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>. Mandat, *RE: Questions and Past Interview Attached*.

<sup>40</sup>. Eric Mandat, interview by author, Champaign.

Past students of Mandat's at SIU have commented on how thoroughly he has incorporated these lessons learned from Keith Wilson into his own professional practice: "Dr. Mandat was always willing to take time out of his busy schedule to be supportive of students. Unlike other institutions I have attended, I can't remember a performance Dr. Mandat did not make it to...Dr. Mandat is a pillar of the SIU community."<sup>41</sup>

Mandat accepted the position of assistant professor at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale immediately after earning his Master of Music degree at Yale. During the summers, he worked on his Doctor of Musical Arts at Eastman, studying with Stanley Hasty. Hasty advanced Mandat's understanding of the larger picture as it related to clarinet study: "Stanley Hasty made me think about talking about things in an efficient way to students...It helped me hone in fairly quickly on what the essence of a problem was rather than trying to get too early into tiny nuances – those will come later, but first set out the major issues quickly."<sup>42</sup>

During his year in residence at Eastman, Mandat studied with Charles Neidich while earning his doctorate. He learned from Neidich how to live in each individual musical moment:

Charlie Neidich taught me the value of spontaneity and to always be engaged intuitively in what you are doing, because even in the most well rehearsed performances there are things that are going to happen that you're going to have to react to spontaneously... He opened up all kinds of

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<sup>41</sup>. Paul Petrucelly, <paulv@petrucelly.com>, "RE: Eric Mandat Questions," private e-mail message to Rebecca d'Alessio, 12 October 12 2010.

<sup>42</sup>. Eric Mandat, interview by author, Champaign.

possibilities for how to think and unfold a piece of music, and as long as you maintained an integrity and internal memory about what you were doing, you could build whatever you wanted. That was liberating and also challenging at the same time.<sup>43</sup>

Neidich was able to demonstrate the same phrase in countless different ways, each one as good as the last but unique from the rest. Mandat has managed to apply this approach not only to his performing and teaching, but also to his compositions. In his works, he sometimes employs a technique wherein a phrase will repeat many times, but each repetition will have distinct phrase marking applied, so that the overall effect is familiar and cohesive, yet exciting.

As a teacher at SIU-Carbondale, Mandat passes on to his students the valuable tools he learned from his teachers over the years. Mandat's primary objective for his students is that they learn how to think creatively: "It seems like the best thing we can do is to try to help people expand their way of thinking as much as possible... they need to feel good about being creative and experimenting and being involved with all of the different things that artistic life is and not just one track. I'm a big fan of helping people be creative. I really think that people who are comfortable doing different things will ultimately be more successful in the long run."<sup>44</sup>

One of the more specific concepts that Mandat emphasizes with his clarinet students is attention to the various ways of blending sound and changing tone colors to help propel the music from one sonic area to another. He uses the

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<sup>43</sup>. Eric Mandat, interview by author, Champaign.

<sup>44</sup>. Ibid.

term "defocusing" when working with his students on sound planes. In the area of multiphonics, the term is used to describe a method of blowing in between two regions of the clarinet to establish the overtone groups that produce multiphonics. "You can't overblow or underblow or you can't move too hard in your embouchure or your body. It was just like meditating – really slow breathing. There is a wonderful meditative feeling about actually practicing these multiphonics that got me interested in trying other kinds of multiphonics. The more that I experimented with different sounds, the more certain sounds reminded me of other kinds of environments and I wanted to try to experiment with those some in composition."<sup>45</sup>

In standard playing, "defocusing" involves "peeling off overtones in the sound so that it allows you to have another color. If you're playing with another instrument, this could mean allowing their color to predominate and yours to tuck in better, essentially melting into the sound of the piano or melting into the sound of the horn, for example. Rather than being the clarinetist against the pianist, each instrument comes in and out of the sound a bit more freely."<sup>46</sup> An observer at one of Mandat's master classes in 1997 wrote about this topic in *The Clarinet*: "He then gave a practical clarification on how using multiphonics can help improve single sounds by knowing which partials may be made more or less present, which will be very helpful not only in personal playing, but identifying problems

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<sup>45</sup>. Marx, *SIUC Clarinetist Expands Instrument's Possibilities*.

<sup>46</sup>. Eric Mandat, interview by author, Champaign.

in students' sounds."<sup>47</sup> Mandat frequently offers master classes and is featured as a performer at conferences and festivals around the globe.<sup>48</sup>

While encouraging his students to explore and develop their creativity, Mandat also embraces the fundamentals of music-making in his studio teaching. In an article for Southern Illinois University's news website, Bonnie Marx wrote, "There's no shortage of traditional musical tools in his studio -- metronomes, for instance. 'A metronome is to musicians what weights are to an athlete,' he said. 'You have to understand stability to move through it and get to flexibility.'"<sup>49</sup> In an article that he wrote for *The Clarinet*, Mandat discussed the drawbacks of an inflexible embouchure and the advantages of a flexible embouchure:

It is important to understand the relationship between flexibility and stability in order to devise an appropriate method whereby one can achieve some degree of stability at being flexible...flexibility does not imply lack of stability, but rather a presence of stability at many different levels simultaneously. Timbral flexibility is effected through subtle changes in embouchure pressure and configuration, tongue position and air pressure. Such changes are essential to the production of multiphonics...the right kind of practice on the right kinds of multiphonics will help increase timbral flexibility in more conventional contexts by increasing stability in making these more minute air and embouchure adjustments.<sup>50</sup>

In the same article, Mandat offered a fresh spin on the traditional concept of clarinet tone:

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<sup>47</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> *Eric Mandat*, [music.siuc.edu/facultystaff/mandat.html](http://music.siuc.edu/facultystaff/mandat.html) (accessed April 13, 2012).

<sup>49</sup>. Marx, *SIUC Clarinetist Expands Instrument's Possibilities*.

<sup>50</sup>. Eric Mandat, "Expanding Timbral: Flexibility Through Multiphonics.," *The Clarinet* 16, no. 3 (1989): 27.

For me, tonal complexity and subtlety of timbral blending in an ever-changing sonic spectral palette are the ultimate goals of a concept of clarinet sound. My hope is that more and more people will be able to attain these goals through dedicated attention to flexibility, and that stability as an end in itself will be exposed as having precisely the same limitations as digital sound synthesis and reproduction have attempting to attain analog concert-hall realism. If we identify and exploit the differences between us and the world of high-tech technique, then we won't be forcing ourselves to compete with technology to try to keep up with its 'solid' world of 'purity.'<sup>51</sup>

Mandat further discussed the concepts of flexibility and stability in an article he wrote for *The Clarinet*, while guiding clarinetists in their approaches to Shulamit Ran's *For an Actor: Monologue for Clarinet*:

In her performance notes to *For an Actor: Monologue for Clarinet*, Ms. Ran states, "It is suggested that the piece be initially learned by carefully observing all notation ---- rhythmic and otherwise. Once learned, however, a considerable measure of freedom, temporal and gestural, may be introduced." This is, of course, an extremely valuable suggestion for learning any piece of music; nuance and flexibility are outgrowths of consistency and stability, not substitutes for them. The complexity of dynamics, articulations and rhythmic gestures in *Monologue* absolutely requires that we pay greater attention to gaining consistency with the notated details before we can optimally realize the potential for interpretive nuance.<sup>52</sup>

In the same article, Mandat writes at length about another area of emphasis in his clarinet instruction, the importance of how a note begins:

Various studies by acoustic scientists have shown that much of the character and *inherent recognizability* of an instrument's sound lies in its attack tendencies. This is exciting news for us clarinetists! The results of these studies suggest that by cultivating a wider palette of attack characteristics, we can create a host of unique personalities which

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<sup>51</sup>. Ibid., 30.

<sup>52</sup>. Mandat, "Master class: For an Actor: Monologue for Clarinet (in A) by Shulamit Ran," 4.

transcend the stereotypical clarinet sound, so it behooves us to concentrate as much as possible on how to start each note for maximum effect in a given context.<sup>53</sup>

Mandat's penchant for using vivid visual and kinesthetic imagery as a teaching device can be evidenced in the same article:

I like to imagine I have a large and heavy metal bell, and that I'm striking it with a heavy wooden beater. I feel this weight throughout my body; I widen my stance. My facial features are serious in preparation for having to deal with this huge weight. My tongue is the beater and my air becomes my arms wielding this heavy hunk of wood, so the attack comes much more from my air than from my tongue. It's not a sharp percussive attack, but more of a push of air, with my tongue releasing as the optimum pressure of air is reached. Finally, since my vision is of a large bell and beater in a very resonant space, I choose a slower opening tempo to enhance the feeling of size, weight, and vastness... I need to put down my heavy wooden beater and go climb onto a passing cloud. I stand more on the balls of my feet rather than the firm plant I had at the opening; I pull my body back slightly from the music stand. I reduce my lower lip firmness by pulling in more at the corners of my mouth, and for the 'airy' sound I don't fully compensate for the resultant larger internal oral cavity. In other words, I'm using my air less efficiently than normal. To counteract the clarinet's resistance change when moving from the third partial Db to the throat Bb, I keep my right hand down.<sup>54</sup>

Articles written by Mandat, such as the ones excerpted above, provide insight into the playful, thoughtful and down-to-earth quality of Mandat's character, musical and otherwise. They also provide evidence of Mandat's scholarly work, as does a collection he composed of sixteen etudes called "Finger Food" that was published in 2002.<sup>55</sup> In a review of the etudes, Kennen White calls this collection, which

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<sup>53</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>. Ibid., 5.

<sup>55</sup>. Phillip Rehfeldt, *New Directions for Clarinet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994; reprint, Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2002), Appendix B. Eric P. Mandat, *Finger Food - Etudes for Clarinet* (Carbondale, Illinois: Cirrus Music, 2002).



does not include extended techniques, "a valuable addition to the clarinet study repertoire... all [etudes] are skillfully written."<sup>56</sup> Instead of offering tempo indications, Mandat encourages a more creative approach to his etudes by including imaginative titles such as "Rolling Boil" and "Beehive."

Dr. Mandat's work as a clarinet teacher extends beyond Carbondale through the teaching exchanges he has participated in over the years. In May of 1991, he was Visiting Artist at the Jazeps Vitols Academy of Music in Riga, Latvia.<sup>57</sup> Mandat also spent short residencies at University of Illinois at Champaign during 2006 and 2007, where he lectured, worked with clarinetists, and performed. Before that, he served as Visiting Professor at Indiana University in 2004. Besides typically presenting a long solo tour every semester at various universities and other venues, Mandat is frequently featured at Clarinet Festivals around the United States.<sup>58</sup> At a 1997 master class at the Michigan Clarinet Contemporary Festival, a reviewer for *The Clarinet* observed that one of the "most helpful pieces of advice from a composer's viewpoint was to look for ways to deconstruct a piece of music to discover a composer's intent, especially with non-traditional pieces. He suggested looking for ideas such as shape, pitch areas,

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<sup>56</sup>. Kennen White, "Finger Food: Etudes for Clarinet," *The Clarinet* 30, no. 3 (June 2003): 78.

<sup>57</sup>. Mandat, *The Extended Clarinet*, Compact Disc liner notes.

<sup>58</sup>. Eric Mandat, phone interview by the author, digital recording, Carbondale, IL 6 July 2010.

and intervallic content to find the unifying aspects of the music, which were extremely valuable comments in a weekend of contemporary music.”<sup>59</sup>

Although he enjoys opportunities to travel around the world as a teacher, Eric Mandat continues to return to his academic home at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. Mandat appreciated the landscape of Carbondale from the start, with its beautiful bluffs and interesting rock formations overlooking the Mississippi River and other locales. An initial fear that a rural setting might inhibit his musical growth was quickly put to rest by a friend who pointed out that one of the advantages of a career in music is its ability to travel anywhere.<sup>60</sup> In addition to teaching clarinet, Mandat teaches analysis courses for graduate students and directs the faculty chamber music program. He also taught saxophone for his first seventeen years at SIU Carbondale.

In the last six years, the addition of many new faculty at SIU Carbondale in music has led to a fresh collective mindset regarding new music, in which everyone is excited to explore new musical territory. One result of this shared excitement is “Outside the Box,” a music festival hosted at SIU Carbondale. In 2007, Liviu Danceanu, from Romania, was a featured guest artist at the festival. He conducted the faculty chamber players that Mandat has led since 2001. According to Mandat, the group has been “focusing on retrospectives of several composers – including [Bernard] Rands and the last year featuring music of Varese. The Varese concert was not only Varese but also other composers

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<sup>59</sup>. Kristin Ward, “The Michigan Contemporary Clarinet Festival,” *The Clarinet* 24, no. 4 (August 1997): 28.

<sup>60</sup>. Marx, *SIUC Clarinetist Expands Instrument's Possibilities*.

involved with liberating sound. That was the title of the program – *Varese and the Liberation of Sound*. It included pieces by Henry Cowell and people who were influenced by Varese – James Tenney, Frank Zappa - and we did [Varese's] *Poem Electronique* and I created new visuals for the piece."<sup>61</sup>

In 1999, the university selected Mandat for its "Outstanding Scholar" award. Students such as Sean Osborn, who studied with Mandat at Southern Illinois University for his Master's Degree, also praise Mandat. Osborn admired Mandat's tone and musicianship in addition to his work in composition. Mandat's premiere of *Folk Songs* at Eastman "was the most interesting thing I heard at the time...the piece blew me away, I didn't know the clarinet could do that. I chose a more orchestral track, but there was nobody I wanted to study more with than Eric, he was the only one I knew who could do that stuff and play Brahms."<sup>62</sup> Before choosing to study with Mandat, Osborn had already distinguished himself as a member of the MET Opera Orchestra. After studying with Mandat, Osborn released solo recordings, performed as Guest Principal Clarinet with multiple symphonies, and served on the music faculty at University of Washington in Seattle.<sup>63</sup> Another prominent graduate of Professor Mandat's at SIU is Michael Norsworthy, who is currently Professor of Clarinet at the Boston Conservatory and highly sought after as a soloist and chamber musician.

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<sup>61</sup>. Eric Mandat, interview by author, Champaign.

<sup>62</sup>. Sean Osborn, phone interview by the author, digital recording, Shoreline, WA 9 September 2010.

<sup>63</sup> *Seattle Wind Symphony: A New Seattle Sound*, [www.seattlewindsymphony.org/sean-osborn.html](http://www.seattlewindsymphony.org/sean-osborn.html) (accessed April 13, 2012).

## CHAPTER 4

### COMPOSITION

Composition played a small role in Mandat's life from early childhood, in the form of short assignments for piano lessons. It wasn't until later in life that he began seriously exploring this area of creative expression, when the exotic sounds of extended techniques begged to be organized in different ways.<sup>64</sup> While studying at Yale for his Master of Music in Clarinet Performance, Mandat started working in 1980 on what would become his first fully developed composition, *Tricolor Capers*. With this work, Mandat established a sense of his composer-self that would continue to the present day. Since that seminal composition, his overarching compositional goals and intentions, processes, techniques, patterns and organization have remained consistent.

Little time passed before Eric Mandat began receiving recognition for his compositions. Shortly after accepting the teaching position at Southern Illinois University, Mandat won first prize in the 1984 Young Performers' Competition. The event was sponsored by the National Association of Composers, USA, and held at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. Twelve finalists each presented two 20<sup>th</sup> century American compositions; Mandat performed *Particles* for clarinet and tape by James Primosch and his own *Tricolor Capers* for unaccompanied clarinet.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>. Gregory Oakes, *Eric Mandat's Style and Compositional Process for Solo Clarinet Music* (University of Colorado, 2004), 15.

<sup>65</sup>. "Mandat Wins Competition.," *The Clarinet* 12, no. 1 (1984): 36.

Positive reviews followed the 1989 release of his first compact disc, *The Extended Clarinet*, which included *Tricolor Capers*, *Folk Songs* (1986), and *The Jungle* (1989). The album also included two recent works by other composers: *Clarinet Piece* by SIU colleague Frank Stemper and *Three Pieces for Clarinet* by Tom Flaherty. Norman Heim wrote:

This recording indicates that Professor Mandat is at the cutting edge of the movement that experiments with extending the capabilities of the instrument...At the same time, Mandat can display a very traditional sound and phrasing that at times is very romantic, not unlike the music of the nineteenth century...All of the pieces presented on the CD are of great interest. This reviewer is partial to Mandat's music, especially the *Folk Songs*. The works of Stemper and Flaherty are of high quality and if not heard with the Mandat music, would be considered outstanding.<sup>66</sup>

In *Cadence*, Carl Baugher praised Mandat's compositional and performance prowess:

Speaking of brilliance, THE EXTENDED CLARINET (Advance FGCD-32) is a collection of modern composition for solo clarinet, impeccably delivered by Eric P. Mandat. Professor Mandat not only plays these difficult, advanced pieces with ease and assurance, half of the pieces are his original compositions... this non-profit label release has much to offer the serious modern listener and clarinet fancier, in particular. Highly recommended.<sup>67</sup>

Michele Gingras offered a review of *The Extended Clarinet* from a clarinetist's point of view:

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<sup>66</sup>. Norman Heim, "Compact Disc Review, the Extended Clarinet," *NACWPI - Official Publication of the National Association of College Wind and Percussion Instructors* 40, no. 3 (Spring 1992): 12.

<sup>67</sup>. Carl Baugher, "Hodgepodge & Shorties," *Cadence* 19 (June 1993): 28.

In one word, **THE EXTENDED CLARINET** is astonishing. Eric Mandat's process at writing and playing is bound to leave any listener in awe. Each work on this recording displays an uncanny understanding of the clarinet's ultimate capabilities...The virtuosity needed for this work is gracefully executed by Mandat...Mandat's performance is exquisite...His approach to extended techniques is phenomenal in that he persists on allowing the sounds to remain beautiful. The listener is constantly challenged and surprised by gorgeous tone color changes, exciting rhythmic action and 21<sup>st</sup> century clarinetist.<sup>68</sup>

Sean Osborn's recording of Mandat's *Preludes for Solo B[flat ] Clarinet, bk 1*, received mixed reviews. Susan Kagan wrote that Mandat "has created some amazing technical effects for the instrument, such as double stops, and what is described in the box notes as multiphonics and microtones. The effect is startling and eerie."<sup>69</sup> On Osborn's recording, Steven Ritter wrote in the *American Record Guide* that although "some of the pieces use these techniques in a far more user-friendly manner than I have heard before... the clarinet itself seems to be breaking under the strain, and the tonal quality of the instrument suffers greatly in the process."<sup>70</sup>

While Steven Ritter might have believed that Mandat's extended techniques burdened the tone quality of Sean Osborn's clarinet on his recording of *Preludes for Solo B[flat ] Clarinet, bk 1*, a more common reaction to Mandat's music can be found in Kristin Ward's 1997 review of a recital given by Mandat at The Michigan Contemporary Clarinet Festival:

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<sup>68</sup>. Gingras, "Compact disc reviews: The Extended Clarinet.," 46.

<sup>69</sup>. Susan Kagan, "Collections: Instrumental - "American Spirit"," *Fanfare - The Magazine for Serious Record Collectors* 29, no. 2 (November-December 2005): 318.

<sup>70</sup>. Ritter, "Collections: "American Spirit"," 199.

The final program of the festival displayed Errante and Mandat in a dazzling and inspiring recital...His first piece, *Etude for Barney*, was a charming piece with an extensive use of quarter tones and multiphonics. The next piece, *Preludes, Book I*, also utilized many microtonal and multiphonic techniques in five short lyrical pieces. Mandat's *Folk Songs*, however, stole the show with amazing musicality and dramatic usage of these extended techniques, showing his extreme command of the instrument, but never overshadowing his expressiveness. The concert and festival ended with a whimsical duet written by Mandat and performed by Mandat and Errante, entitled *So What Elsa's New?*, which was written for Elsa Ludewig-Verdehr and this festival.<sup>71</sup>

Though Eric Mandat's primary objective in composing is for his own personal satisfaction, his careful consideration of the audience sets his music apart from other compositions using similar techniques. "Obviously, the music's personal for me, but I also have a strong interest in making music that I hope will be listenable as well. So that's my tough balance. I try to come to terms with that which is personal and still try to make it sound like it means something to somebody else, too."<sup>72</sup> Mandat's intentions resonate with his audience - Kristin Ward was fascinated to see at a master class how extended techniques "can be used in a truly musical fashion and not for effect only."<sup>73</sup> Mandat achieves a musical connection with his listeners, in part, through his use of familiar compositional techniques: "I think the traditional forms are fairly readily accessible; and obviously I have some interest in my music being accessible for

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<sup>71</sup>. Ward, "The Michigan Contemporary Clarinet Festival," 29.

<sup>72</sup>. Oakes, *Eric Mandat's Style and Compositional Process for Solo Clarinet Music*, 22.

<sup>73</sup>. Ward, "The Michigan Contemporary Clarinet Festival," 28.

my listeners. I want people to sort of be able to go along where I am going compositionally if they are listening to it."<sup>74</sup>

Mandat's desire to incorporate more performers in his works has led him in a new direction with his use of multiphonics. In a 2003 interview, Mandat discussed the difficulties that multiphonics create when more than one performer is involved:

There are some really delicate balances that one needs to be able to maintain that sometimes are interfered with when there are a number of players, especially other clarinet players playing in the same space—same environment—at the same time. There are strange interferences that occur, and sometimes the multiphonics actually don't work when you're playing them side-by-side with somebody. Each person individually could play them beautifully in separate rooms, but when they get together, the interferences create some strange effects. It's hard to believe, but I remember doing a certain amount of improvising with Bill Smith when I visited him some years ago in Washington. This is already at least ten years ago, maybe more. We were just improvising in his living room. We thought we would get into this multiphonic thing, and it was really rough for both of us. We were having a terrible time. I have subsequently done some of those kind of experiments with students, and the same kind of thing happened. We would find structures that we were sure we could play by ourselves easily. Then we would play them together and they suddenly became very difficult. The result for an outside listener just wasn't too thrilling. So that's why I haven't really worked too hard at that. There are some places I have multiple multiphonic moments for multiple players, but not much. For comic effect and not really for growing musical, thematic things.<sup>75</sup>

In the same interview, he reveals that in his "earlier pieces, I wrote a lot just for me to play, and now I'm writing more with the idea that I hope more people will

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<sup>74</sup>. Masserini, *The Compositional Techniques of Eric Mandat and an Analysis of Tricolor Capers and Folk Songs*, 80.

<sup>75</sup>. Oakes, *Eric Mandat's Style and Compositional Process for Solo Clarinet Music*, 28.



play..."<sup>76</sup> This change in the numbers of performers impacts his use of extended techniques: "The more people I write for, the less aural impact multiphonics have...Even my more recent solo pieces have not used a lot of multiphonics. I think that's just growing out of my interest in having more players involved performing."<sup>77</sup>

Mandat's feelings remained the same years later in a 2002 interview with Deborah Bish: "I seem to be moving away from multiphonics a bit, and a little more toward different layers of activity – from one region to another, but not strictly vertically, more horizontally. I don't know whether that will continue or not, but most of the ideas have in my head currently are along those lines... I have enjoyed working in the long movement format, but without other instruments it is just going to get a progressively harder to sustain longer movement works doing the kinds of things I think I want to do with extended techniques. So, I'm anxious now to start writing for larger ensembles for the larger movement works, and then probably go back to the shorter movement works for solo pieces."<sup>78</sup> Mandat followed this plan by composing *Dark Energy* in 2002 for clarinet, voice, flute, trumpet, 2 trombones and percussion.<sup>79</sup> After writing *No Holds Barred* in 2003 for flute, clarinet, violin, alto saxophone, trumpet, 2 trombones, accordion and

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<sup>76</sup>. Ibid., 29.

<sup>77</sup>. Ibid., 26.

<sup>78</sup>. Bish, "In the Mind of Mandat," 63.

<sup>79</sup>. Eric Mandat, *Dark Energy* (Carbondale, IL: Cirrus Music, 2002).

percussion, Mandat returned to composing for one or two clarinets between 2004 and 2005.

A wide variety of influences have made an impact on Mandat and his music over the years. People who have influenced Mandat include clarinetist-composer William O. Smith, composer George Crumb, music professor and composer Robert Morris, and performers such as Jan Garbarek and Frans Brüggen. Mandat acknowledges that his music is also "influenced by rhythmic organizations of jazz and pitch organizations of traditional, non-Western music."<sup>80</sup> Non-musical influences include theatrical and other visual-based stimuli, architecture and language.

In the liner notes for *The Extended Clarinet*, Eric Mandat writes special thanks "to William O. (Bill) Smith, whose music first inspired me to seriously explore the clarinet's possibilities."<sup>81</sup> William O. Smith provided Mandat with a series of "firsts," including humming while playing ("I have been humming for a long time. I guess the first time I encountered humming was in William O. Smith's Variants."<sup>82</sup>) and musically written multiphonics:

[William O.] Smith probably more than anyone was influential, because he knew how to put the sounds together. He knew what worked on the clarinet, and how to make it come off in a musical way. A number of other compositions that I had encountered were simply from people who were reading Bartolozzi and picking some combinations that looked interesting on paper but didn't necessarily sound like they looked. Smith

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<sup>80</sup>. Oakes, *Eric Mandat's Style and Compositional Process for Solo Clarinet Music*, 16.

<sup>81</sup>. Mandat, *The Extended Clarinet*, Compact Disc.

<sup>82</sup>. Masserini, *The Compositional Techniques of Eric Mandat and an Analysis of Tricolor Capers and Folk Songs*, 87.

knew what everything was going to sound like and he wrote with those ideas in mind. That inspired me to get more involved in multiphonic regions."<sup>83</sup>

Mandat has dedicated works to Smith, and also composed pieces with Smith in mind:

Double Life is about William O. (Bill) Smith's double life (actually multiple life) as composer, jazz musician, and "legit" clarinetist. The first movement is titled Double Life, and requires 2 clarinets, B-flat and A. They are played one at a time, and then simultaneously, with the B-flat serving as the "jazz" voice, and the A clarinet serving as the "legit" voice. The second movement is Deep Thoughts. I made an extension from PVC pipe pieces which allow me to play a low D, low C and low A using the inside of my legs to close holes along the pipe. The last movement is titled, To Be Continued..., and is a fast, jazz/blues whirl.<sup>84</sup>

Mandat wrote "Bill's Back Room" also with Smith in mind. While visiting Smith in 1993, Mandat found inspiration from being around Smith's boundlessly innovative energy. The title stems from the initial creation of the work, which began while Mandat practiced one afternoon in the back room of Smith's home. The music reminds Mandat of Smith's personality. "He is so gentle and moves just like a breeze all of the time. He doesn't leave footprints. (Laughs)."<sup>85</sup>

Mandat discusses the magic of Bill Smith at length as he recalls in an interview with Deborah Bish a performance experience he shared with Smith:

Bill has for more years than anybody been involved with pushing the clarinet in places that it has never been. Every time I see him he's always got something new that he's discovered that he's incorporated into a piece and he's just always completely excited and completely fresh about

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<sup>83</sup>. Bish, "In the Mind of Mandat," 60.

<sup>84</sup>. Mandat, *RE: Questions and Past Interview Attached*.

<sup>85</sup>. Bish, "In the Mind of Mandat," 63.

everything. I had a sort of extended stay and recitals and classes in Seattle a year and a half ago and it included a concert at a little gallery space that half the concert was my written music and the other half of the concert was an improv session and I asked Bill if he would play during the improv part and he said “yeah, sure!” and it was just wonderful to watch him interact. There was another young performer who ran this gallery space and was also a clarinetist – she was very good, she had a lot of energy and a lot of note ideas. We kind of think of Bill Smith as this mellow, quiet stage man who puts that perfect note in one place, but when the improv started she had a lot to say and was getting lots of notes out and she finished her little piece and he followed it up with an almost identical revamp of what she had done but then expanded on that – it was good, totally energized – the whole performance, right from the start. And took exactly what she had and built something even better and more fiery on top of it – it was pretty impressive to me. That’s what Bill always does for me. The first time I spent any extended time with him I had a sabbatical, this was early 90s, maybe 92 or something like that. I stayed at his house for nearly a week in January and the idea was he was going to help me with my compositions – we actually never quite got to that, but we played together, improvised, experimented around with multiphonics, growl things. The best was one morning I woke up and he was already downstairs, he had newspaper all over the dining room table, he was cutting and making all kinds of things and what he was doing was cutting out a pattern for an apron or a smock where you could put little parts of the clarinet and carry them around in a movement way and sort of put the clarinet together and take it apart and have a place to store the pieces. Unbeknownst to him because he was just focused on cutting this pattern out, he put the paper on, it was from a newspaper and on the front was a full page ad from some investment firm that says “announcing a bold new concept” or something like that, and it was perfect. Then he said “get on the sewing machine” and he threw some old fabric at me and so I sewed up these little smocks and we took them to school and played together with a percussionist who was there at the school. He was always like that, everything was so exciting and fresh and new. That’s what I like about him.<sup>86</sup>

Another composer who has made an impact on Mandat is George Crumb.

Crumb's highly concentrated pitch organization has influenced Mandat's music, as has Crumb's ability to combine structural simplicity and symmetry with exotic

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<sup>86</sup>. Ibid.

sounds.<sup>87</sup> "The things I liked, especially about Crumb, that I could say have sort of found their way in my music, is that the raw materials – the pitch layout, intervallic layout, the organization – is pretty strict and pretty square, and I would say that is probably true of a lot of music. I like how he clouds the 'squareness' of it with these really interesting and different timbres. And that's something I like to try to do, too."<sup>88</sup> Mandat often uses a technique that he found in Crumb's music wherein an intervallic pattern is established and then presented with a small part of the pattern missing, only for the "gap" to emerge soon thereafter in the music.<sup>89</sup> The exotic timbres heard in George Crumb's music encouraged Mandat to explore different kinds of timbral possibilities on the clarinet, which led him to become involved with non-conventional fingerings for traditional pitches.<sup>90</sup> Mandat pushes the boundaries of his instrument while working with the clarinet, instead of against it:

There's so many things that the clarinet can do and that we can do with the instrument...to purposely work to not be aware of those things is to purposely fight against the tendencies of the instrument. It seems to me that freedom in playing shouldn't have a lot to do with fighting, it should have a lot to do with collaboration with your instrument and balance. Achieving a common ground and understanding with your instrument about its limitations and how you can push it and how it's going to push back and how you can make that move through time in as many varied ways as possible.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>87</sup>. Oakes, *Eric Mandat's Style and Compositional Process for Solo Clarinet Music*, 15-16.

<sup>88</sup>. Eric Mandat, interview by author, Champaign.

<sup>89</sup>. Masserini, *The Compositional Techniques of Eric Mandat and an Analysis of Tricolor Capers and Folk Songs*, 79.

<sup>90</sup>. Bish, "In the Mind of Mandat," 60.

<sup>91</sup>. Eric Mandat, interview by author, Champaign.

Mandat learned to test the limits of timbre and time, in part, from listening to Norwegian saxophonist Jan Garbarek and Dutch recorder virtuoso Frans Brüggen. Jan Garbarek's ability to produce a wide variety of timbres from the saxophone has inspired Mandat to push the clarinet to its timbral limits, while Franz Brüggen's solid and driving sense of time combined with "floating" notes within that time has encouraged Mandat to attempt to "transcend metronomic time" in his own compositions.<sup>92</sup>

Jazz music and improvisation have both played a significant role in Mandat's life since an early age. He began his undergraduate studies with a major in jazz saxophone before changing his emphasis to the clarinet, and the style and spirit of jazz has remained with Mandat throughout his career. He continues to develop his improvisation skills as a member of the Tone Road Ramblers, an experimental sextet that relies largely on improvisation. This work also influences his compositional process.

One of the very good things that the Tone Road Ramblers does for me is keeps me out of ruts, because each of the members of the group is such a good improviser. Each of the people can just take the music in a completely brand new direction instantly, and you're forced to build on that just as quickly as they've taken you there, and it just keeps you really fresh and aware that there are more possibilities always than you've ever thought.<sup>93</sup>

Jazz music from the 1950s and early 1960s has made a particular impact on Mandat's compositions: "People like Miles Davis and Ornette Coleman were

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<sup>92</sup>. Bish, "In the Mind of Mandat," 60.

<sup>93</sup>. Oakes, *Eric Mandat's Style and Compositional Process for Solo Clarinet Music*, 24.

really working on some interesting microtonal shading in their music...other performers like John Coltrane working with multiphonics and improvisation inspired me a lot."<sup>94</sup> This inspiration comes across in his music, as noted in a review of *The Extended Clarinet*: "By no means a Jazz recording, there is, nevertheless, a certain affinity with Jazz styles and attitudes and some of this music would not sound out of place on a John Carter record."<sup>95</sup>

Another important influence in Mandat's compositions has been folk music. Mandat appreciates the departure that music from other cultures provides from traditional western music: different colors, different pitches and different scales. He also senses in folk music a simple directness and honesty that is not always present in western music.<sup>96</sup> "I think almost any folk music is interesting to me, because it just grows out of natural, everyday life. Therefore, it is the closest music to the people. It's not some esoteric thing out there, it's just part of daily life. I listen to quite a bit of folk music."<sup>97</sup> Although Mandat's music does not contain exact quotations of folk tunes, even in his *Folk Songs*, his music does include "imitation of folk-like sounds. For example, the fourth movement [of *Folk Songs*] was inspired by listening to recordings of Japanese shakuhachi music...The first movement is the same kind of thing. The beginning of it sort of reminded me of some fiddle playing, and I certainly didn't copy any particular

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<sup>94</sup>. Bish, "In the Mind of Mandat," 60.

<sup>95</sup>. Baugher, "Hodgepodge & Shorties, 28.

<sup>96</sup>. Marx, *SIUC Clarinetist Expands Instrument's Possibilities*.

<sup>97</sup>. Bish, "In the Mind of Mandat," 60.

fiddle tune."<sup>98</sup> Mandat's interest in folk music developed while completing coursework for his doctorate:

I had been taking a class at Eastman called *Current Practices* with Robert Morris, and one of the really interesting things about him is his ability to draw together music from all different styles and periods, and draw parallels between them. It was really eye opening to me. He spoke a lot about various types of folk songs and traditional music of other cultures. His wife is an ethnomusicologist so he is quite knowledgeable in that area. That got me interested in listening to a lot of non-western folk music recordings. I think that probably started the ball rolling. I wrote the third movement [of *Folk Songs*], as part of a project for this class. I wasn't inspired by any particular folk songs for that movement, but just the whole idea of music with a restricted pitch content.<sup>99</sup>

Eastman theory and composition professor Robert Morris made a lasting impact on Mandat's philosophy and approach to music composition and analysis. Morris introduced the possibility of exploring relationships between different types of music to Mandat. "One of the cool things he would do in class would be to talk about some 20<sup>th</sup> century piece and say 'It reminds me exactly of some Machaut piece' or 'Sounds like Charlie Parker's 2<sup>nd</sup> cut on his third album.'"<sup>100</sup> Mandat tested these comparisons by listening to the music cited by Morris in the school library, and he was always thrilled to confirm the relationships between disparate musical genres that had never occurred to him before Morris' class.<sup>101</sup> This manner of thinking continues to influence Mandat's approach to music to this

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<sup>98</sup>. Oakes, *Eric Mandat's Style and Compositional Process for Solo Clarinet Music*, 18.

<sup>99</sup>. Bish, "In the Mind of Mandat," 62.

<sup>100</sup>. Masserini, *The Compositional Techniques of Eric Mandat and an Analysis of Tricolor Capers and Folk Songs*, 84.

<sup>101</sup>. Ibid.



day. Mandat identified strongly with the mathematical approach that Morris applied to music, and was excited to see how this application helped him to immediately recognize architectural organization. Additionally, the encouragement that Morris provided aided the burgeoning composer, particularly when Morris suggested that *Folk Songs* was worthy of being sent out to publishers.<sup>102</sup>

I had been listening to folk songs, Japanese things, and Charles Neidich was there and was fresh off of some really great things from Japan, so we talked a lot about that. So I started getting into various folk songs and things like that. I recognized that a lot of them had restricted pitch content and they were fairly repetitive and that there were also some interesting rhythmic things going on. It wasn't necessarily harmony or even melody that was the most important thing, it was just the active 'hanging,' just going over something.<sup>103</sup>

Charles Neidich, Robert Morris' colleague at Eastman, influenced Mandat's compositions in addition to his clarinet playing. Neidich had recently visited Japan and Eric was listening to Japanese folk music, taking notice of the restricted pitch content, interesting rhythms and repetition. The two had long discussions about music in general, including compositional style.<sup>104</sup> Mandat played *Folk Songs* for Neidich, and Neidich offered intuitive opinions, though Mandat did not implement his occasional suggestions. Neidich influenced the ending, however, according to Eric:

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<sup>102</sup>. Eric Mandat, phone interview by author, Carbondale.

<sup>103</sup>. Masserini, *The Compositional Techniques of Eric Mandat and an Analysis of Tricolor Capers and Folk Songs*, 84.

<sup>104</sup>. Eric Mandat, phone interview by author, Carbondale.

I got the idea [for the ending of Folk Songs] when I heard Charlie Neidich play Stockhausen's *In Freundschaft*. There is that one section where you have that trill on the low E and he did all this goofy stuff and just went nuts. Not so much his playing, but just the way it was done in the piece, but I thought it was pretty corny. That is my joke on Stockhausen and Charlie. He was always a big circular breather, he would be doing this thing, just playing like crazy, his eyes are bulging out, and I thought that was the perfect time right before death.<sup>105</sup>

Extra-musical influences on Mandat's compositions include theater and movement, wordplay, meditation, and architecture. Mandat wrote in an article for *The Clarinet* that "to ignore the visual implications inherent in any live performance is to limit the opportunities for artistic expression."<sup>106</sup> Although he didn't begin incorporating visual cues into his music until *Ritual* in 2000, he believes that a lot of his earlier music has "a theatrical root somewhere hiding ...I've always enjoyed theatre. I've always enjoyed the visual part of performing as well as the sonic part."<sup>107</sup> Mandat stated earlier in the same interview, "Even as early as *Tricolor Capers*, which is about as early as I go in my pieces, some of the initial concepts behind that piece had to do with little theatrical events taken out of my daily life as a student."<sup>108</sup> The movements for *Ritual* are suggestive rather than explicit, serving to compliment the ceremonial tone of the music. The performers enter from opposite sides of the stage as the music begins with a low and slow melody. As the music gradually moves higher and builds to a climax,

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<sup>105</sup>. Masserini, *The Compositional Techniques of Eric Mandat and an Analysis of Tricolor Capers and Folk Songs*, 89.

<sup>106</sup>. Mandat, "Master class: For an Actor: Monologue for Clarinet (in A) by Shulamit Ran," 4.

<sup>107</sup>. Oakes, *Eric Mandat's Style and Compositional Process for Solo Clarinet Music*, 26.

<sup>108</sup>. *Ibid.*, 25.

the players interact with the other until they are fingering the other player's instrument while still blowing air into their own clarinet. *Black Swirls* (2004) is a companion piece to *Ritual* and offers more specific directions in its optional choreography. In *Rowzer!*, a 2005 work for solo clarinet, Mandat suggests the image of a "grumpy old dog snarling at passersby" to the performer, in the hopes that each performer will find unique physical movements to help inform individual interpretations of the music.<sup>109</sup> Mandat believes that movement can greatly serve music, in general, "It's not only for the audience but for our own understanding of the music and our own ability to play well. If our entire bodies are moving in the same direction, then we have a better chance of our fingers doing the right thing, our air doing the right thing...I think the control of the large muscle groups is a prerequisite to the control of the small muscle groups."<sup>110</sup> As a child Mandat enjoyed building model cars and was a self-professed "lego maniac." He comes from a family rooted in technical art and architecture and admits "that kind of balance in construction is something that's in our family history somehow and for me it has manifested itself in composition."<sup>111</sup> Mandat touched on the process of building in composition in an earlier interview with John Masserini, "when I get a little fleeting improvisational snippet, then I enjoy the process of building something out of it."<sup>112</sup> The playful quality of building

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<sup>109</sup>. Eric Mandat, interview by author, Champaign.

<sup>110</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>111</sup>. Eric Mandat, interview by author, Champaign.

<sup>112</sup>. Masserini, *The Compositional Techniques of Eric Mandat and an Analysis of Tricolor Capers and Folk Songs*, 72.

music extends to Mandat's fondness for word play in the titles and instructions of his music. Many of his compositions have a title that contains a type of word play, from his earliest work to the present. "Even with Tricolor Capers, it's kind of a word play. It sounds like it's something that is real, but it's not. It sounds like it's some kind of brand name. I like sounds of words and I've experimented with moving words around and writing poetry and things like that. I like how words can mean lots of different things. I love puns, I love all kinds of word games."<sup>113</sup>

Mandat's compositional process, techniques, organization, and notation register on a meditative level. His approach to composition is relaxed and organic, usually beginning with a short musical or conceptual idea: "Sometimes, I have a specific idea in mind based on a concept or a title. I try to follow that thread. Sometimes, it's just a sonic pattern or even finger pattern that feels or sounds kind of fun as a result of just improvising. I'll try to write that down and build around it. Those are the two main generators of compositional material."<sup>114</sup> *Folk Songs*, a five movement work for solo clarinet that can be found on his recording *The Extended Clarinet*, emerged from short improvised segments that turned into the middle of the third movement. According to Mandat, "I actually wrote the third movement first, very strict with a limited intervallic collection... there were certain kind of folk sounds, especially in the middle section of the third

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<sup>113</sup>. Eric Mandat, interview by author, Champaign.

<sup>114</sup>. Oakes, *Eric Mandat's Style and Compositional Process for Solo Clarinet Music*, 17.

movement. So I just called that piece Folk Songs, and, as I played it, I started thinking of some other companion pieces that I might link to it.”<sup>115</sup>

The majority of Mandat's compositions begin as improvisations, moving "left to right as opposed to creating some large, architectural structure and then filling in the details...The details over time begin to suggest a large architectural shape whereas some other composers will create the large shape first and then fill in with details and specific materials."<sup>116</sup> The architectural shapes that emerge from this process tend to be traditional in nature. “My forms are generally very traditional. I do it consciously, partly because I like the traditional forms, but also because I think there is a lot to deal with as a performer and as a listener with just the different sounds, and I like some of the stability of the traditional forms to pour those sounds into.”<sup>117</sup> Mandat realizes that the unfamiliar sounds in his music can overwhelm a listener, and he hopes to make his music as accessible for the listener as possible; using traditional forms helps make his music less foreign-sounding to the ear.<sup>118</sup> “There’s no doubt that I probably don’t work at stretching certain structural boundaries, and composers who are interested in those kinds of things find my structures pretty superficial. And they are! The idea is to put different colors on the same basic structural relationships. Like looking at a great mountain scene, but instead of purple and green, you’re going to use yellow and

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<sup>115</sup>. Oakes, *Eric Mandat's Style and Compositional Process for Solo Clarinet Music*, 18.

<sup>116</sup>. *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>117</sup>. Bish, “In the Mind of Mandat,” 60.

<sup>118</sup>. Masserini, *The Compositional Techniques of Eric Mandat and an Analysis of Tricolor Capers and Folk Songs*, 80.

blue. Sometimes it makes it kind of humorous, I think, but I don't really do a lot to mess up traditional structures. I like traditional structures. I like the concept of architecture as something that is bound by certain principles of balance that kind of need to be adhered to unless one radically changes the materials to such an extent that those balance aspects of the architecture can be altered as well."<sup>119</sup>

Although Mandat does not organize his tonal centers around traditional major and minor frameworks, he creates pitch centers around collections of notes that provide structure throughout sections. "As the sections change, the points of tonal emphasis change as well. I try to have those relationships, those pitch relationships, carry through on both the macro level and the micro level."<sup>120</sup>

"Whether it is B major, B minor, B Phrygian or just B with a bunch of notes going around it, b is like the primary tone, it can act as a tonic. ...it is not so much 'tonality' in the traditional sense...with dominant, sub dominant...not traditional relationships. It is a little closer to the Debussy approach to principal tones...you will get that strong tone over and over...all the harmonizations can change as long as that fundamental tone is there... I like symmetry...not necessarily strictly one against one symmetry but various types of symmetry that are out there. And I like close relationships between surface level activity and longer range goals, especially in terms of movement intervallically."<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>119</sup>. Oakes, *Eric Mandat's Style and Compositional Process for Solo Clarinet Music*, 23.

<sup>120</sup>. Bish, "In the Mind of Mandat," 60.

<sup>121</sup>. Masserini, *The Compositional Techniques of Eric Mandat and an Analysis of Tricolor Capers and Folk Songs*, 75.

Intervallic structure and content play a significant role as a unifying element in Mandat's music, even though patterns emerge unconsciously in the beginning of his compositional process. "A whole lot of that [key relationships] was not too conscious. Not at this point in working out my music...as I started writing more and more pieces those sounds came back again, those ones that I liked, and then I started looking at them a little more carefully and analyzing them, seeing what it was that I did and why it was that I liked them."<sup>122</sup> Eric likes to incorporate an abundance of fifths and fourths in his music. He will occasionally add an unexpected pitch to a collection of fourths and fifths that he'll then resolve in a traditional manner. Another favorite interval for Mandat is the half step, both as a direct relationship and as a basis for a tonal area.<sup>123</sup>

Over time, Mandat began to recognize and play with his natural inclinations in the area of intervallic relationships. "Because I do enjoy analysis—I spend a lot of time doing analysis, I teach it—it ends up being a part of what I do."<sup>124</sup> For example, he might have "a preoccupation with the concept of being sort of rotational and out of phase and then ultimately rotating back into phase over time."<sup>125</sup> "Doing that kind of thing [retrograde and other symmetrical relationships] is pretty common for me. Usually if I make a little change in what

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<sup>122</sup>. Ibid., 78.

<sup>123</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>124</sup>. Oakes, *Eric Mandat's Style and Compositional Process for Solo Clarinet Music*, 18.

<sup>125</sup>. Ibid.

otherwise looks like a restatement, you can bet that I am going to do something with that interval on a kind of regular basis, long-range basis.”<sup>126</sup>

In a review of *The Extended Clarinet*, Heim notes how Mandat's use of pitch, timbre and various extended techniques work well for an overall impact: "The music shows extended ostinatos that often have quick changes of register, use various multiphonics, has extended use of tones in the fifth, seventh and ninth partials, tremolos, sudden changes of mood and dynamics, flutter tonguing glissandos, retuned notes giving a scale reminiscent of Indian or mid-eastern music, a sound with an ethereal, almost flute-like tone, circular breathing, split tones, jazz inflections, just to name some of the special devices used... The rhapsodic character of much of this music could result with little musical direction, but the use of ostinatos, the repetition of melodic devices, and the feeling of an over-all structure, gives this music excellent interest and musicality. The feeling of rhythm set in motion by the use of various melodic devices is really interesting and is the element that makes this music most attractive."<sup>127</sup> Incorporating extended techniques seamlessly into a musical work takes much skill from the composer as well as from the performer. Mandat uses a "figure skating analogy for the early days of multiphonics in composition. It sort of simulated the early days when people were doing triple jumps and in music the notes would be going around in an even flow and then everything would stop and you would hear a 'whah' (ugly sound) and then the music would go on again.

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<sup>126</sup>. Masserini, *The Compositional Techniques of Eric Mandat and an Analysis of Tricolor Capers and Folk Songs*, 78.

<sup>127</sup>. Heim, "Compact Disc Review, The Extended Clarinet," 12.



There were a lot of pieces that I encountered that were sort of like that because it took time for people to set up the multiphonic and then play it and then go on to the music. And it was kind of that way with figure skating when they were starting those first really heavy technical triple jumps, now quads, they'd be skating along with beautiful movement and suddenly they would stop and they'd go up and down the ice three or four times to gain speed and they'd do their triple and then they'd go back and do their routine."<sup>128</sup>

Mandat's success with using multiphonics and other extended techniques in his music can be attributed in part to his moderate, relaxed, and experimental approach to life: "You can't overblow or underblow or you can't move too hard in your embouchure or your body. It was just like meditating – really slow breathing. There is a wonderful meditative feeling about actually practicing these multiphonics that got me interested in trying other kinds of multiphonics. The more that I experimented with different sounds, the more certain sounds reminded me of other kinds of environments and I wanted to try to experiment with those in composition."<sup>129</sup>

Experimenting and "playing" with an idea enters the picture in the alternate finger patterns that Mandat chooses to serve his music: "If I'm writing something and, because I'm listening to it a lot as I'm writing it, if it's really enjoyable or it makes me laugh or it makes my fingers laugh—there are certain

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<sup>128</sup>. Eric Mandat, interview by author, Champaign.

<sup>129</sup>. Marx, *SIUC Clarinetist Expands Instrument's Possibilities*.

patterns that feel really good and I practice them for weeks and weeks and they still feel good and make my fingers laugh, then I think they're good patterns."<sup>130</sup>

Other clarinetists playing Mandat's music may find that it takes awhile for their fingers to "laugh." "Sometimes I don't realize how hard it is because as I am writing it with my clarinet in hand I am also practicing it measure by measure as I am writing it."<sup>131</sup> Difficulties presented to performers through Mandat's use of extended techniques is one of the limitations that help define his music. "The first thing I wrote that used extended techniques was a little *Sonata* for unaccompanied clarinet my junior or sophomore year. I had some other little experiments, and then didn't start going at it more seriously until 1980 when I did *Tricolor Capers*; that was when I was a student at Yale."<sup>132</sup> Even though his use of alternate fingerings can appear daunting, Mandat points out, "the fingerings look hard, but a lot of the music is pattern oriented, and once you get the feel of a pattern, a lot of music relates to that pattern in a physical way. I guess a bit of advice would be to attack a pattern early on in the piece, and you will find that it physically recurs, and you can get a sense of the music that way rather than having to try and slog through each fingering. I put them there for reference, but they are not so necessary once you start getting the physical feel of the music."<sup>133</sup> Mandat contributed a chart of his microtonal fingerings for Philip Rehfeldt's 2003 edition

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<sup>130</sup>. Oakes, *Eric Mandat's Style and Compositional Process for Solo Clarinet Music*, 22.

<sup>131</sup>. Masserini, *The Compositional Techniques of Eric Mandat and an Analysis of Tricolor Capers and Folk Songs*, 74.

<sup>132</sup>. Bish, "In the Mind of Mandat," 60.

<sup>133</sup>. *Ibid.*, 62.

of *New Directions for Clarinet*. "I use a lot of the same fingerings for my compositions, they're the ones that seem to work easiest for me both in terms of sound and in terms of ease of fingering combinations. They're pretty much standard – independently, Michael Richards has pretty much come up with the same quarter-tone fingerings and he's done extensive study on microtonal fingerings and is really good at that."<sup>134</sup>

Mandat views microtones in terms of color: "I think that for me microtones are by and large not some new scale system or anything like that, but more like decorations or ornaments of regular equal tempered pitches. There are a few other instances, but not a lot, most are straight forward...my last couple of compositions I have gotten away from that sort of microtonal decoration."<sup>135</sup>

Another challenge presented to performers of his music is Mandat's penchant for odd time signatures. "[Using odd numbered time signatures] seems kind of natural to me. I don't know why it feels natural. But I also like the effect of how even time signatures suddenly sound odd in the framework of odd time signatures. Sort of like a little joke or game."<sup>136</sup> Mandat has been playing around with humming in his work since he first encountered William O. Smith's *Variants*.<sup>137</sup> Works by Mandat that utilize the technique of humming while playing include *Tricolor Capers*. Mandat's music also sometimes requires

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<sup>134</sup>. Eric Mandat, interview by author, Champaign.

<sup>135</sup>. Masserini, *The Compositional Techniques of Eric Mandat and an Analysis of Tricolor Capers and Folk Songs*, 67.

<sup>136</sup>. *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>137</sup>. *Ibid.*, 87.

performers to circular breathe and double-tongue. Mandat started circular breathing in 1985 while working on *Folk Songs*.<sup>138</sup>

Some of the limitations encountered by Mandat in his compositions have been introduced through his use of extended techniques. He discovered that his penchant for using multiphonics, for instance, works well for one player but not for multiple performers. "Multiphonics for multiple instruments are complex at best. The sounds just don't come out the same way and they aren't as effective for the audiences, it's a lot to take in and discern when you have 3 or 4 people. For the players, it's hard to make the subtle changes that are necessary to maintain the balance of the pitches when you have all that extra sound around you."<sup>139</sup> As a result of complications due to multiphonics, most of Mandat's earlier works comprise shorter movements combined to form a piece, with each movement suggesting its own timbral atmosphere. "One of the difficulties that I encountered when writing for multiphonics or with non-conventional fingerings was that there would be a certain timbre set up, and it was always very jarring to move away from that timbre. I wanted to try and find some ways of moving from one timbre region to another more gradually – timbre modulation, rather than just staying in one world or having abrupt shifts."<sup>140</sup> *The Jungle* was his first experiment with creating a long and uninterrupted movement that weaves in and out between

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<sup>138</sup>. Bish, "In the Mind of Mandat," 62.

<sup>139</sup>. Eric Mandat, interview by author, Champaign.

<sup>140</sup>. Bish, "In the Mind of Mandat," 62.

different timbres. The absence of breaks within the work presents a formidable challenge for performers.

Mandat attempts to be as precise as possible in the notation for his compositions, while allowing each performer some personal interpretive freedom. In an article he wrote on a work by Shulamit Ran, Mandat shares some thoughts on the importance of interpretation: "Yes, intuition and spontaneity are essential to a vibrant performance, but uninformed intuition or spontaneity without direction ultimately translate to listeners as such and to me are analogous to building a house by merely assembling the materials without some idea of how the finished product will look aesthetically or stand up structurally."<sup>141</sup> Despite the fact that Mandat is meticulous regarding his own notation of duration, dynamics in order to highlight time relationships, he believes that the performer has to "ultimately make the decision whether those relationships are important enough...or whether they can be adjusted somehow; if there is room for rubato here and there."<sup>142</sup> He expresses further openness to different interpretations of his works in two separate interviews. In an interview with John Masserini, Mandat discusses his flexibility regarding interpretation:

In composition I am exact...Yet I hear a lot of successful performances of pieces where a written *piano* or a written staccato will be disregarded by the performer and it works. So I am sure that there is room for flexibility. Obviously when I am writing a piece and thinking about it, I have my ideas and I am going to try my best to put my ideas down in as clear a way

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<sup>141</sup>. Mandat, "Master class: For an Actor: Monologue for Clarinet (in A) by Shulamit Ran," 6.

<sup>142</sup>. Masserini, *The Compositional Techniques of Eric Mandat and an Analysis of Tricolor Capers and Folk Songs*, 63.

as possible. If for no one else, at least for me so I can remember it. And then it is when deciding hierarchies that usually the performer decides, ‘That is really taking away the thunder of some bigger event that I need to show later,’ then you are adjusting things in the piece. I think that is good. The hope is that if the piece is strong it should benefit and grow from different interpretations.<sup>143</sup>

In a later interview with Deborah Bish, Mandat reiterates his earlier thoughts:

I suppose any composer has an image in his head about a piece. I certainly had my image, which inspired the metronome marking which I put in. But it doesn’t preclude other interpretations – it just can’t. My feeling is that if the music is constructed well enough, it is also then flexible enough to take on a host of interpretations. That is why Beethoven’s music has six thousand CDs out – because it can stand those kinds of interpretive changes that people want to do. So, I’m very interested to hear other people’s interpretations of my music because it opens up new avenues of thinking for me that I have certainly never considered.<sup>144</sup>

Performers not only influence Mandat's works through interpretation, but also through their commissions and other inspirations for compositions. Mandat prefers writing for specific performers as opposed to writing for a broad audience. He enjoys taking into consideration the personality and playing style of an individual as he develops the music, so that the eventual performance feels as natural as possible.<sup>145</sup> Mandat composed a number of works with clarinetist Robert Spring in mind. Spring appreciates the level of detail in Mandat’s

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<sup>143</sup>. Ibid., 73.

<sup>144</sup>. Bish, “In the Mind of Mandat,” 60.

<sup>145</sup>. Crookshank, *Selected Chamber Music by the Clarinetist/Composer Eric Mandat: A Performer's Perspective*, 48.

compositions, “he likes accuracy as well as excitement.”<sup>146</sup> Mandat shaped his composition to test Spring’s limits: “[Sub(t)rains O’Strata’s Fears] is one that is tough. I really wrote it with Bob Spring in mind and I knew I could put unbelievable tempos on there and he would work them up. He did, and it is really hard. There are a couple sections that I have put a few rubatos in.”<sup>147</sup> Spring admits that Mandat’s works “all have taken a lot longer to learn than I ever thought. SOS broke new ground in so many ways. I remember when I premiered it in Paris, Bill Smith came up and said, ‘I now know where new music is going.’ I practiced SOS for 8 weeks, 5 hours a day – and only got it up to tempo the day before the premiere!!!”<sup>148</sup> Mandat did not limit the difficulty simply to the marked tempos, “I really tried to take advantage of Robert Spring’s techniques in this last piece (S.O.S.) just as much as possible, since it was written for him. I knew that he could double tongue all day, so I wrote him a piece that made him double tongue all day!”<sup>149</sup>

In general, Mandat is “not driven by commissions,”<sup>150</sup> instead preferring to write works that reflect current aspects of his life.<sup>151</sup> Mandat composed *Tricolor Capers* in 1980 while earning his Master of Music at Yale, and the piece served to

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<sup>146</sup>. Robert Spring, <rspring@asu.edu>, “Re: Interview with you regarding Eric Mandat,” private e-mail message to Rebecca d’Alessio, 15 March, 2011.

<sup>147</sup>. Masserini, *The Compositional Techniques of Eric Mandat and an Analysis of Tricolor Capers and Folk Songs*, 88.

<sup>148</sup>. Spring, “Re: Interview with You Regarding Eric Mandat.”

<sup>149</sup>. Bish, “In the Mind of Mandat,” 62.

<sup>150</sup>. Oakes, “*Eric Mandat’s Style and Compositional Process for Solo Clarinet Music*”, 30.

<sup>151</sup>. *Ibid.*, 22.

reflect the contrasts that Mandat observed between the more flexible, forgiving and down-to-earth environment at North Texas and the more rigid, structured and materialistic climate at Yale.

Moving out of Texas and out of my rural existence, and then living near New York was a big cultural change. I found that what seemed to me at the time was a really intense focusing in on materialism by a lot of people. The “Portent” was these little snippets of things coming at me from lots of different sources. The “Sway” was just the way people were overcome by materialism. The “Bop” was probably more my way of laughing it off.<sup>152</sup>

Mandat described the second movement, "Sway," as a parody of people who buy in too quickly to the latest idea or trend.<sup>153</sup> In the liner notes for *The Extended Clarinet*, Mandat wrote that “*Tricolor Capers* was written during my student days at Yale, when I was wondering just how real the 'real world' was. The first movement, 'Portent,' is an exposition of the material which is to be used in the second and third movements. 'Sway' is a study in microtonal applications. 'Bop' is a jazz-inspired frenzy in modified rondo form.”<sup>154</sup>

Humor and parody influenced parts of *Folk Songs* (1986), as well, though much of the work explores more serious musical territory. The idea for the exciting ending of the fifth (and last) movement, "Like a Flamenco dancer with St. Vitus Dance," emerged after Mandat watched a performance of Stockhausen's *In Freundschaft* by Charles Neidich. Mandat studied clarinet with Neidich at

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<sup>152</sup>. Masserini, *The Compositional Techniques of Eric Mandat and an Analysis of Tricolor Capers and Folk Songs*, 77.

<sup>153</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>154</sup>. Mandat, *The Extended Clarinet*, Compact Disc.



Eastman while composing *Folk Songs*, and he wanted to emulate the spirit of Neidich when he performed *In Freundschaft* that day: "playing like crazy, his eyes bulging out, and I thought that was the perfect time right before death."<sup>155</sup> In the sheet music, Mandat indicates "Wild and exaggerated swells and diminuendos, ad lib." An article from Time Magazine in 1931 describes the disease: Victims of St. Vitus's Dance "twitch, quiver, quake and grimace uncouthly. The posturings resemble a grotesque dance like the old time "shimmy" and "Charleston." During the ignorant Middle Ages victims of the disease were taken to "dance" before images of St. Vitus, patron of comedians."<sup>156</sup> A modern description of the usually temporary ailment describes St. Vitus's dance as an "acute disturbance of the central nervous system characterized by involuntary muscular movements of the face and extremities."<sup>157</sup> Either way, the title paints a vivid picture and an even more vivid musical performance!

*The Extended Clarinet* liner notes states that "Each of the five movements of *Folk Songs* uses a specific set of extended performance techniques to evoke a particular folk-like character. In movements I and IV, the music is reminiscent of actual folk melodies (Appalachian and Japanese, respectively), and in movements II and III the melodies are imaginary. Movement V uses a Flamenco cliché as a

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<sup>155</sup>. Masserini, *The Compositional Techniques of Eric Mandat and an Analysis of Tricolor Capers and Folk Songs*, 89.

<sup>156</sup>. Medicine: Fever v. St. Vitus's Dance, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,742341,00.html> (accessed March 18, 2011).

<sup>157</sup>. Chorea, <http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/chorea> (accessed March 18, 2011).

jumping off point for a frantic flood of notes.”<sup>158</sup> The first movement intentionally evokes the sounds of mountain fiddling, the second movement unintentionally reminds some listeners of African music, and the fourth movement purposely imitates the music of Japan.<sup>159</sup> The fourth movement requires the clarinetist to remove the mouthpiece and barrel and play the clarinet as an end-blown flute.

While in residence at Eastman, Mandat had weekly private composition lessons for one semester with Warren Benson. Mandat was working on *Folk Songs* at the time, and Benson thought Mandat would have a hard time writing for a "journeyman" performer, the average performers who purchase music. Benson shared with Mandat past experiences of his own in which performers would not play difficult music, but Mandat realized that his motivation for writing music was different from a professional composer. Mandat didn't want to compose for the average clarinet player. Benson worked on notational issues with Mandat, to help make sure that the part was as performer-friendly as possible, and he made sure that Mandat wasn't purposely making the piece unnecessarily challenging.<sup>160</sup> Mandat wrote *The Jungle* in 1989 for a Chicago New Music festival. The program that included his new work was titled *My Life in the Jungle of Zeros and Ones*. Played in one continuous long movement, the piece explores three musical sections. "Call to Arms," the first section, "juxtaposes static, mechanical elements

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<sup>158</sup>. Mandat, *The Extended Clarinet*, Compact Disc.

<sup>159</sup>. Masserini, *The Compositional Techniques of Eric Mandat and an Analysis of Tricolor Capers and Folk Songs*, 86.

<sup>160</sup>. Eric Mandat, phone interview by author, Carbondale.

with quirky, 'out-of-tune' personal outbursts."<sup>161</sup> The section served as a comment on Mandat's personal "battle" with the prevalent use of electronic music during that time, with the machine-like sounds representing electronic music and the outbursts representing his own solo and acoustic musical voice.<sup>162</sup> The second section, "Lament," "utilizes consonant multiphonics and gradually pulls them out of tune."<sup>163</sup> The third section, "Apotheosis," "does not seek to resolve the intonation tensions of the previous sections, but rather presents the material with repetitive floating rhythms, as if in resignation."<sup>164</sup> Circular breathing is central to the performance of *The Jungle*, but Mandat provides alternate recommendations in the score notes for those clarinetists who are unable to circular breathe. Mandat admits that *The Jungle* required particular effort from him during the writing process and afterwards in performance: "Nothing had challenged me at that level like [*The Jungle*] in regards to stamina."<sup>165</sup> He is always relieved to learn that the stamina he developed in 1989 is still with him whenever he performs *The Jungle*. Part of the difficulty stems from Mandat's desire to compose a work that could travel "from one sound world to another with seamless transitions."<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>161</sup>. Mandat, *The Extended Clarinet*, Compact Disc.

<sup>162</sup>. Oakes, "Eric Mandat's Style and Compositional Process for Solo Clarinet Music", 20.

<sup>163</sup>. Mandat, *The Extended Clarinet*, Compact Disc.

<sup>164</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>165</sup>. Eric Mandat, phone interview by author, Carbondale.

<sup>166</sup>. Ibid.

Mandat composed *Etude for Barney* in 1990 at the request of Phillip Rehfeldt, in honor of Barney Childs' sixty-fourth birthday. Rehfeldt taught with Childs at the University of Redlands, and compiled *Etudes for the Twenty-First-Century Clarinetist; A Festschrift for Barney Childs on the occasion of his 64th birthday from his colleagues and former students*. Mandat relished the opportunity to "dream up" a solo clarinet piece based on the character traits of Barney Childs. In his music, Mandat attempted to reflect the oppositional personality traits of raw and politically incorrect versus the sensitive and caring persona that lie beneath the surface of Childs.<sup>167</sup> This short piece uses few multiphonics but many quarter-tones, and is arguably the easiest of Mandat's compositions to perform.

*Music For Clarinets* began as a work for solo clarinet and clarinet ensemble in Latvia in 1992. Howard Klug organized a clarinet choir festival and after hearing the piece, requested that Mandat compose three additional movements to accompany his original work. The resulting four movements last over thirty-five minutes and were performed by Klug's students at the 1995 ClarinetFest in Chicago. The work is rarely performed, partly due to lack of exposure and also because of its high level of difficulty.<sup>168</sup>

*Preludes, Book 1*, composed in 1994, has been recorded by Eric Mandat and also by his former student, Sean Osborn. David Niethamer wrote about the piece in a 2004 review of Sean Osborn's *American Spirit*: "Perhaps my favorite

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<sup>167</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>168</sup>. Ibid.

work on this CD is Eric Mandat's Preludes - Book I for solo B-flat clarinet. The titles of the five preludes are catchy and descriptive without seeming superfluous or silly. Mandat uses "extended techniques" - multiphonics and microtonal pitch adjustments mostly - in ways that fit the short but tightly constructed preludes without seeming musically artificial."<sup>169</sup> The five short preludes include "...Illinois Central," "...the looking-glass," "...homage to P.J.," "...spin moves," and "...in Bill's back room." "...Illinois Central" reproduces the sound of train whistles using multiphonics, and Mandat was inspired by the timing of the Illinois Central train through Carbondale at approximately 8:10 every evening. Mandat noticed this particularly in the recital hall during the warm months, when the windows were open due to the absence of air conditioning. As the performer would begin a slow movement, an uninvited musical companion in the form of the train would accompany the music. Mandat wrote a prelude that would welcome the inevitable train.<sup>170</sup> "...the looking glass" explores multiphonics in contrary motion, creating a delicate and distorted sound environment for the listener. "...homage to P.J." pays homage to Paul Jean-Jean, the famous French clarinetist-composer from the early twentieth century. Mandat adds a multiphonic modern twist to one of Jean-Jean's most famous etudes. He introduces motives from the first of Jean-Jean's 18 Etudes at the beginnings of phrases, and then ends the phrases with multiphonics. Mandat maintains the prevalence of sixths, though he changes the quality from

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<sup>169</sup>. David Niethamer, "Reviews: American Spirit," *The Clarinet* 31, no. 4 (September 2004): 84.

<sup>170</sup>. Bish, "In the Mind of Mandat," 62.

minor to major, throughout his tribute to one of his favorite etudes.<sup>171</sup> "...spin moves" attempts to reproduce the powerful strength along with the smooth and agile grace witnessed on the basketball court. Mandat composed this prelude while watching the 1994 NCAA basketball playoffs, and he employs microtones as well as mixed meter in his effort to represent the sport at its finest.<sup>172</sup> The last prelude, "...in Bill's back room," is a fittingly longer than the rest of the preludes (the rest clock in at around one and one-half minutes while this one is nearly two and one-half minutes), and pays tribute to clarinet-composer William O. Smith. The music suggests a breeze, both in the directions and in the music, like the literal and figurative breezes Mandat felt while working with Smith in the wildly creative environment of his back room. The piece is not a breeze to perform, however, because of its constant use of multiphonics throughout all five movements.

Robert Spring commissioned *Sub(t)rainS O' Strata's fearS* in 1996 for solo clarinet. Besides the playful title (S.O.S. and SSOSS), Mandat infused playful qualities throughout the music. "Strata" refers to various pitch levels in the piece, particularly in the last movement.<sup>173</sup> This is one of Mandat's most technically challenging works, and he is both surprised and delighted to find out regularly that clarinetists (particularly on the East Coast) choose to play the piece

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<sup>171</sup>. Ibid., 63.

<sup>172</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>173</sup>. Oakes, *Eric Mandat's Style and Compositional Process for Solo Clarinet Music*, 28.

both in concert and at auditions.<sup>174</sup> It is one of the most challenging works in the modern clarinet repertoire, with a range that goes to altissimo C, both double tonguing and circular breathing are a performance requirement, and an abundance of semi-tones.

*So What Elsa's New* was composed for internationally known clarinetists Elsa Ludewig-Verdehr and F.Gerald Errante. Mandat and Errante premiered the work at the Michigan State Contemporary Clarinet Festival in 1997. Elsa Verdehr, who served as Professor of Clarinet at Michigan State from 1964 until 2007, hosted the festival. While composing the work, Mandat tried to reflect the energetic personalities of each performer in the music. He also incorporated jazz elements with a nod to Errante, and Verdehr's cheerful disposition inspired many of the upbeat musical qualities found throughout the short piece.<sup>175</sup> Recently, the work was shortened, with Mandat's permission and guidance, for a performance at Domaine Forget, an international music festival in Canada. Mandat was pleased with the resulting piece.<sup>176</sup> This is one of the few works by Mandat that does not contain multiphonics, though semi-tones abound.

Mandat celebrated Southern Illinois University's purchase of a new bass clarinet in 1999 by writing a solo piece for the instrument called *Chips off the Old Block*. Mandat recorded the piece on his 2007 cd recording "Black Swirls."<sup>177</sup> It

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<sup>174</sup>. Eric Mandat, phone interview by author, Carbondale.

<sup>175</sup>. Crookshank, *Selected Chamber Music by the Clarinetist/Composer Eric Mandat: A Performer's Perspective*, 48.

<sup>176</sup>. Eric Mandat, phone interview by author, Carbondale.

<sup>177</sup>. Mandat, *Black Swirls*, Compact Disc.

is a virtuosic work that requires the bass clarinet low C, and uses the range to altissimo B. The piece is a very technical, with multiphonics and complicated rhythms.

*Ritual*, composed in 2000, is a slow work for two clarinets that also appears on the cd recording "Black Swirls." The multiphonics used are simple, but the rhythmic demands can be challenging at the marked tempo of quarter note equals forty beats per minute. This is the first of Mandat's works to feature optional choreography for the performers. The original choreography that accompanied the work presented many challenges for the performers, and now the piece is performed often without any choreography. Mandat appreciates the efforts of some performers to create their own choreography to accompany *Ritual*. The work is sometimes used as a companion piece to *Black Swirls*, another clarinet duet with optional choreography.

Mandat wrote and performed *Cotton Candy* in 2000 for a presentation and performance that he gave as the recipient of the 1999 SIUC Outstanding Scholar Award. In it, Mandat plays with subtle structural elements and experiments with different types of symmetrical construction. This short work features many quarter-tones and can be heard on the cd "Black Swirls."

Two recent graduates of SIU inspired *One Liners*, a clarinet trio premiered at the 2000 International ClarinetFest in Oklahoma by Mandat, Sean Osborn and Michael Norsworthy. Leadership roles are traded between parts to reflect the strengths of all three performers, with the first player doubling on Bb clarinet and



Eb clarinet while the third player doubles on Bb clarinet and bass clarinet.<sup>178</sup> The work contains seven movements, and any number of the movements may be performed in any order, though Mandat prefers that the movements form a phrase (i.e. "Realistically speaking, life's secrets lie within reach if we look behind the punch line" or "Life's secrets lie behind, if we look"). He also requests that if "The Punch Line" is to be performed, it be performed last or alone. The seven movements include "Reelistically Speaking" "Life's Secrets" "Lie(s)" "Within Reach" "If We Look" " Behind" and "The Punch Line." "Reelistically Speaking," incorporates Irish characteristics in jig forms to reflect Osborne's ethnic background.<sup>179</sup> It is a fast movement with traditional tonalities infused with Mandat's signature quarter-tones, and the third player plays both Bb clarinet and bass clarinet (not at the same time). "Life's Secrets," for three Bb clarinets, is only twenty measures in length, but Mandat makes the most of those very slow measures with a tempo marked at quarter note equals fifty-four beats per minute and the noted direction that the music be played "never without depth."<sup>180</sup> "Lie(s)" is fast and light with Eb clarinet and 2 Bb clarinets, and the 7/8 meter helps performers fulfill the style marking "with uneasy precision." "Within Reach" features constantly changing meters and a staccato style that frequently stops, as though a stilted conversation is attempting to find its footing and flow. "If We Look" is short and slow and directed to be played with "Probing intensity," for Eb

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<sup>178</sup>. Eric Mandat, phone interview by author, Carbondale.

<sup>179</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>180</sup>. Eric P. Mandat, *One Liners for Clarinet Trio* (Carbondale, IL: Cirrus Music, 2000).

clarinet, Bb clarinet and Bass clarinet. "Behind" features the same combination of instruments, and does not contain any repeated sections. "Reelistically Speaking" is the longest and most complicated movement, for three Bb clarinets. Of this movement, Mandat shares in an interview with Suzanne Crookshank that "Timing is much more critical than *time* as a means for really communicating something important in music."<sup>181</sup>

*3 for 2* for clarinet and percussion was commissioned by clarinetist Robert Spring and percussionist J.B. Smith and written by Mandat in 2001 and revised in 2002. The three movements include "Pruned Danish," which is for clarinet plus snare drum and marimba, "Veiled Images" features clarinet and vibraphone, and "Outta My Way!" is written for clarinet and drumset. The first movement draws on elements from Nielsen's Clarinet Concerto (solo snare in opening, similarities in thematic material),<sup>182</sup> while the second movement explored the duality of the Chimes of Persia, with their ability to sound light (major) or dark (minor) depending on the direction of the wind.<sup>183</sup> The last movement tests the percussionist, sometimes to the point of injury. Mandat might consider a warning in future publications of the piece: "Practice with Care." J.B. Smith injured

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<sup>181</sup>. Crookshank, *Selected Chamber Music by the Clarinetist/Composer Eric Mandat: A Performer's Perspective*, 48.

<sup>182</sup>. Suzanne Crookshank compares the themes in detail in *Selected Chamber Music by the Clarinetist/Composer Eric Mandat: A Performer's Perspective*.

<sup>183</sup>. Eric Mandat, phone interview by author, Carbondale.

himself while practicing the work, as did the percussionist Mandat worked with, and Mandat himself became injured while practicing this demanding piece.<sup>184</sup>

Mandat composed a collection of right hand and left hand etudes titled *Finger Food* between 2001 and 2002. The etudes address technical issues that Mandat experienced over the years along with technical issues that Mandat's students experienced while studying with Mandat. The etudes are musically interesting and short as well as helpful for advancing clarinet technique.

Mandat wrote two works between 2002 and 2003 for the Tone Road Ramblers, a sextet that specializes in improvisation and experimental music of which Mandat has been a member since 1989. *Dark Energy* was written in 2002 and *No Holds Barred* composed in 2003. *Dark Energy* adds voice to the sextet and has been performed numerous times and recorded on "Dancing With the Ramblers,"<sup>185</sup> while the loud and raucous *No Hold Barred* added parts for accordion, violin, trumpet and alto saxophone.

Written four years apart, *Ritual* (2000) and *Black Swirls* (2004) became natural companion pieces by virtue of their shared instrumentation (two clarinets) and shared twist of optional choreography. Both pieces appear on the recording "Black Swirls."<sup>186</sup> Although *Ritual* is performed often, usually without choreography, the technical difficulties presented in *Black Swirls* have resulted in less frequent performances by clarinetists. The original choreography for both

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<sup>184</sup>. Eric Mandat, phone interview by author, Carbondale.

<sup>185</sup>. Tone Road Ramblers, *Dancing with the Ramblers*, Einstein Records EIN-018, 2008, compact disc.

<sup>186</sup>. Mandat, *Black Swirls*, Compact Disc.

works is a challenge to execute, and Mandat would like to see clarinetists create their own choreography for future performances.<sup>187</sup> Score notes for *Black Swirls* suggest that “Body movements in the sections of short bursts of notes followed by rests (mm. 1-6, 27-29, 76-78, 95-99, 118-124) should be spasmodic, and rest lengths between bursts need not be strictly adhered to. The performers should face each other for the final “FACE OFF” beginning at m. 118; the clarinets may be used as quasi weapons during the final measures.”<sup>188</sup> Page turns are to be made in character by the specific performer as indicated. According to the primary website where Mandat’s works may be purchased, *Black Swirls* “is organized in ABCBA form. The A sections represent the wildest, most physical aspects of the pieces, the B sections represent the more "intellectual" aspects, and the center C section is the most "spiritual" section.”<sup>189</sup>

Mandat spoke with fellow clarinetist Ani Berberian about writing a work for two Eb clarinets and piano to premiere at the Tokyo ClarinetFest in 2005, and the result was *2 Cool 2 B Flat*, a piece that explores “the funny things that the Eb clarinet can do.”<sup>190</sup> This composition includes four movements that range from energetic and light to calm and meditative. Difficulties include an altissimo range that soars to high B.

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<sup>187</sup>. Eric Mandat, phone interview by author, Carbondale.

<sup>188</sup>. Mandat, *Black Swirls*.

<sup>189</sup>. *Black Swirls for Two B-flat Clarinets*, <http://www.justforwinds.com/black-swirls-for-two-b-flat-clarinets-114575.cfm> (accessed August 7, 2011).

<sup>190</sup>. Eric Mandat, phone interview by author, Carbondale.

The playful qualities found in Mandat's works continue with *Rrowzer!*, a work for solo clarinet penned in 2005. The score suggests that the performer "take noticeable, interruptive breaths throughout, like an old grouchy dog snarling at passers-by. If you wish to circular breathe, please consider waiting until after m. 62 or even after m. 70." An actual dog didn't inspire this piece. Mandat was in residence with the Tone Road Ramblers at the Ragdale Foundation Artist Colony when he wrote the work, and he wanted to capture the energy that he experienced improvising with the Ramblers in a piece that could grow wild with sound to the point of a growl.<sup>191</sup> Mandat's signature quarter-tones and multiphonics help to establish and maintain that growling energy. The piece is featured on Mandat's "Black Swirls" cd.

*Peg & Hole Collide* is Eric Mandat's only work for clarinet quartet. The instrumentation calls for two Eb clarinets, one doubling Bb, plus bass clarinet. It is a continuous work that was composed with the specific personalities of four performers in mind. Howard Klug requested that Mandat compose a quartet to be performed at the Atlanta ClarinetFest in 2006 by Klug, Mandat, Jorge Montilla and Min-Ho Yeh. The part for Howard Klug embodies a tough teacher, "barking" kind of role, while Montilla's part represents his fiery Venezuelan personality. The quieter role represents Min-Ho Yeh, while Mandat assigned himself the role of outsider, infiltrating and instigating throughout the piece.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>191</sup>. Eric Mandat, phone interview by author, Carbondale.

<sup>192</sup>. Ibid.

Kelly Johnson commissioned *The Moon in My Window* for solo clarinet in 2007 for her cd project “Child’s Play.”<sup>193</sup> The cd collection focused on child-based themes, and Mandat’s composition represents a day in the life of a child. The title movement is based on one of Mandat’s favorite childhood books, Crockett Johnson’s *Harold and the Purple Crayon*, in which Harold embarks on an adventure armed with a purple crayon that he uses to draw various situations in which to interact. Eventually Harold grows tired but has difficulty finding his way back home. He draws thousands of windows because he knows that his bedroom has a window, but it is not until he finally remembers that the moon is always in his window that he is able to draw what he needs to fall soundly asleep. The work depicts the daily activities of a child, including waking, playing, eating, nap time, and bedtime.<sup>194</sup> Six movements include Butterfly Morning, You’re It, P’nut But’r, Music Box, All Aboard and The Moon in My Window.

*Double Life* was written in 2007 for solo clarinet in honor of Bill Smith. The work is in three movements, the first of which is based on Smith’s double life as a “legit” composer and great jazz performer. The movement requires playing Bb and A clarinets, first separately and then at the same time. The second movement explores the subject of Bill’s constant experimentation, such as the time that he went to a grocery store to find an aluminum can with exactly the right sound for a performance with Mandat at the Bowling Green Festival, or the time at his home when a visiting Mandat discovered him cutting up newspaper for a

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<sup>193</sup>. Kelly Johnson, *Child’s Play*, Potenza Music, 2011, compact disc.

<sup>194</sup>. Mandat, *RE: Questions and Past Interview Attached*.

tunic that he would then sew so that he could place sections of his clarinet in the pockets as he walked around performing with various parts of his clarinet. This second movement incorporates the use of a PVC pipe extension in a nod to Bill Smith's endless creativity, though Smith did not actually use extensions himself. The third movement is a fast, technical and jazz-influenced. Mandat used approximate quotes and rhythmic ideas from Smith's works, including a quote in the second movement of one of the tunes that Smith recorded with Dave Brubeck, "Blue Rondo A La Turk." On that piece, Mandat recalls Smith saying, "Damn, I hate that tune." Mandat enjoyed writing this piece as a tribute to Bill Smith's great personality.<sup>195</sup>

Robert Spring and Jana Starling commissioned *Bipolarang* for two B-flat clarinets in 2008. "Bipolar" in nature, the work swings between two extremes as it presents a game of opposites, including simulated fighting and quickly shifting gears throughout the piece. For a significant portion of *Bipolarang*, the two clarinet parts are deliberately written to play a quarter step out of tune. Both parts are technically challenging, particularly the part composed for Spring, with a slow section of extensive multiphonics.<sup>196</sup>

Mandat drew inspiration for the 2009 *Four Tempers* for three clarinetists and drum set from back to back performances of two very different clarinet quartets at the ClarinetFest in Kansas City. The first quartet, from Portugal (which coincidentally is where the work would premiere), performed a long program of

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<sup>195</sup>. Eric Mandat, phone interview by author, Carbondale.

<sup>196</sup>. Eric Mandat, phone interview by author, Carbondale.

non-stop energetic showmanship, often hysterical and completely geared toward engaging the audience. The next quartet consisted entirely of bass clarinetists from San Francisco who sat in a circle facing inward, with long hair and dressed in jeans, hunched over their instruments like wizards around a caldron. *Four Tempers* encapsulates the abundant energy from both performances, with gnarly sounding bass clarinets representing swirling energy and burning anger.<sup>197</sup>

*Lines, Spaces, Planes* for clarinet trio and *Three Hasty Studies* for Bb clarinet ensemble premiered at the Oklahoma Clarinet Symposium in 2010. Both compositions are in three movements, and the latter work was written in honor of famed clarinetist Stanley Hasty. Each movement focuses on a different idea of Hasty's teaching, from finger motion to the use of air.<sup>198</sup>

In addition to the works previously discussed, Mandat has written pieces for singular purposes that have not entered his permanent list of compositions for a variety of reasons. These include:<sup>199</sup>

*Satellites*, for six to eight B-flat clarinets, 1982, written for SIUC students.

*Fried by Friday*, for jazz quintet, 1984, written for the faculty jazz quintet.

*Talu*, for violin, clarinet, cello, and piano, 1991, written for his first trip to Latvia.

*Music Box*, for solo clarinet, 1989, part of this work continues to live on in

*Moon in My Window*.

*Steam Room*, for jazz quintet, 1984.

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<sup>197</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>198</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>199</sup>. Ibid.



*Elegy*, for jazz duo, 1985, composed for a faculty recital.

*El Acabose*, for jazz sextet, 1987, composed for a faculty ensemble.

*Flotation*, for piano and soloists, 1987, composed for a faculty ensemble.

*The Last Outpost*, for jazz quintet, 1987, composed for a faculty ensemble.

*Pass/Out*, for jazz quintet, 1987, composed for a faculty ensemble.

*Blue Tango*, for jazz sextet, 1990, composed for a faculty ensemble.

*Blowout*, for jazz sextet, 1990, composed for a faculty ensemble.

*Smoke and Steel*, for bass voice and piano, 1985, never performed, written as an assignment for Robert Morris.

*Movement*, for clarinet and piano, 1985, written as an assignment for Robert Morris.

*Prelude*, for chamber ensemble, 1985, written as an assignment for Robert Morris.

*Passages*, for clarinet, piano, and percussion, 1986, composed for a lecture recital at Eastman. This work includes "Inner Galaxies in the Inner Universe of Music," which includes microtones and frequency relationships at inaudible levels between pitches and rhythms. The recital explored larger temporal organization and pitch organization plus numerical relationships in music. Mandat had a lot of fun with the mathematical element of the program, which also included a work by Anthony Elton that featured difference tones, and a work by Xenakis highlighting complex durational micro elements.

## CHAPTER 5

### PERFORMANCE

Eric Mandat's life as a performer keeps him as busy as his endeavors in teaching and composition. In addition to maintaining a busy solo career performing his own works and those of other composers, Mandat has also served as a member of two chamber ensembles, the *Transatlantic Trio* since 1991 and the *Tone Road Ramblers* since 1989. Additionally, Mandat performed and recorded with *Ciosoni*, a trio including Tim Lane on flute and Michael Cameron on double bass, from 1991 to 1997. He has premiered his works at international conferences in Stockholm, Tokyo, Vancouver, and Chicago and has performed as soloist with the Latvian National and Chicago Chamber Orchestras as well as the Cleveland Chamber Symphony. Mandat is currently also a member of the Chicago Symphony's MusicNOW ensemble.<sup>200</sup> Whether performing solo music or chamber music, Mandat never fails to demonstrate his capacity for risk-taking on the stage.

One of Mandat's first awards in clarinet performance came with his selection as a prizewinner at the 1983 International Clarinet Competition in Denver, sponsored by the International Clarinet Society. Since then, reviewers have called his style "riveting,"<sup>201</sup> his delivery "impeccable,"<sup>202</sup> his virtuosity

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<sup>200</sup>. Eric P. Mandat, *Eric Mandat Clarinetist/Composer* (Carbondale, IL: Digital recording, 2010), <http://www.ericmandat.com> (accessed August 3, 2011.).

<sup>201</sup>. Kyle Gann, "Music: Run That by Me Again (concert Review)," *The Village Voice* 34 (November 1989).

<sup>202</sup>. Baugher, "Hodgepodge & Shorties," 28.

"graceful,"<sup>203</sup> his circular breathing and technique "flawless,"<sup>204</sup> his tone color changes "gorgeous,"<sup>205</sup> and his rhythmic action "exciting."<sup>206</sup> More than one reviewer has noted Mandat's mastery over the clarinet. Norman Heim discusses this in a review of *The Extended Clarinet*.

Mandat has a wonderful control of the instrument and his beautiful slurs involving wide intervals, and the quick change of registers, is really to be envied; he has control of the sound encompassing the entire range of the instrument. The music demands a virtuoso performer who has a full command of the instrument. Mandat has this command and the music offers a quality podium for the presentation of a quality performance.<sup>207</sup>

Kristin Ward wrote of Mandat's authority on his instrument in an article about the Michigan Contemporary Clarinet Festival: "Mandat's *Folk Songs*, however, stole the show with amazing musicality and dramatic usage of these extended techniques, showing his extreme command of the instrument, but never overshadowing his expressiveness."<sup>208</sup>

While Mandat's control over his instrument is noteworthy, the risks that he takes in the areas of teaching and composition are also expressed in clarinet performance. He has made a habit of tackling extreme technical challenges, in his own compositions as well as others, and he embraces roles and parts when other clarinetists are unwilling.

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<sup>203</sup>. Gingras, "Compact disc reviews: The Extended Clarinet.," 46.

<sup>204</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>205</sup>. Ibid., 46.

<sup>206</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>207</sup>. Heim, "Compact Disc Review, The Extended Clarinet," 12.

<sup>208</sup>. Ward, "The Michigan Contemporary Clarinet Festival," 28.

If [an opportunity's] out there, and if nobody wants to do it...I know for me, I'm going to try it. The worse thing that happens is that I learn...and that just doesn't seem like much of a risk to me...I try to have as many different kinds of experiences that I can so I understand what other people go through, what other people deal with, what other people think about.<sup>209</sup>

Mandat's experience performing the title role in John Eaton's pocket opera *Don Quixote* served as rich learning material. Mandat's role required playing the clarinet, singing, shouting and dancing plus other movement. On stage for almost the entire production, Mandat recalls, "I had to memorize my part and travel all around the stage and use my instrument as a sword in addition to playing it and also singing. This was all in John Eaton's sound world, which was all about microtones and quarter tones so it was challenging to sing!"<sup>210</sup> Mandat's clarinet playing in the role was praised by Ted Shen in the *Chicago Tribune*, "His clarinet playing, through which much of Quixote's personality is conveyed, was versatile and expressive."<sup>211</sup> Mandat displayed the same fearlessness when a chamber group called him at the last minute with the news that they couldn't find anyone willing to tackle the bass clarinet part in Ligeti's *Chamber Concerto for 13 Instrumentalists*. Mandat had no reservations taking on the challenge with one of his "all-time favorite pieces" and had "loads of fun" playing the part that is "famous for being incredibly gnarly hard."<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>209</sup>. Eric Mandat, interview by author, Champaign.

<sup>210</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>211</sup>. Ted Shen, "Operatic Innovator John Eaton Has Winners in 'Golk' and 'Don Quixote,'" *Chicago Tribune*, June 9, 1996, 9.

<sup>212</sup>. Eric Mandat, interview by author, Champaign.

Mandat performs regularly with a variety of chamber groups. Since 2000, Mandat has performed multiple concerts each season with the Chicago Symphony's Chamber Music Series "MusicNOW," started by Augusta Read Thomas when she became the composer-in-residence with the Chicago Symphony. The conducted chamber series combines masterworks and premieres by leading contemporary composers. Ted Shen reviewed one performance in *The Chicago Tribune*: "To be sure, Northwestern prof [sic] Karlins' Concerto Grosso No.1 for Nine Instruments dates to the start of his career in 1960. Even then, he knew how to write virtuosic though not flashy individual parts-- for a full complement of winds and strings plus horn and trombone-- then fit them snugly into an ensemble. It's very much a piece of its time that yet has stood the test of time, especially when performed with such elation and care by a nonet that included clarinetist Eric Mandat as well as CSO violist Li-Kuo Chang and flutist Walfrid Kujala. Cliff Colnot coordinated the forces assiduously."<sup>213</sup> John von Rhein reviewed a MusicNOW performance of Osvaldo Golijov's "Ayre" featuring soprano Dawn Upshaw: "Her instrumental colleagues entwined their sounds with the singer's most capably -- better than that in the case of Eric Mandat (wailing away on klezmer clarinet) and Michael Ward-Bergeman (uttering weird drones on his hyper-accordion)."<sup>214</sup>

Mandat formed another chamber ensemble, The Transatlantic Trio, while participating in a faculty exchange in 1991 between Southern Illinois University

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<sup>213</sup>. Ted Shen, "Music Now' Still Holds Lot of 'Then' Younger Composers Missing but Composition Choices and Performances Are First Rate," *Chicago Tribune*, May 26, 2000, 2.

<sup>214</sup>. John von Rhein, "Tempo," *Chicago Tribune*, June 6, 2007, 3.

and the Latvian Academy of Music in Riga. Pianist Peteris Plakidis is professor of composition at the Latvian Academy, and cellist Ivars Bezprozvanovs is a freelance musician in Latvia. Karen Danessa describes the group in a compact disc review: “The Transatlantic Trio is one of Latvia’s most celebrated chamber ensembles and remains active even though the members live half a world apart.”<sup>215</sup> Reviews of a recording made in Riga in 1996 by the ensemble of works by Brahms and d’Indy disagree on which recording was more successful of the two works. Danessa makes a case for the Brahms:

The sensitive interpretations of the Brahms *Trio* is especially interesting, with heartfelt phrasing and musical nuances. It is musically outstanding and better than the interpretation of the d’Indy *Trio*. While the performance of the d’Indy is clean, precise and accurate, it lacks a needed bravura and verve. Eric Mandat’s musical rendition of both pieces, though, is very sensitive and musically astute. His tone is nicely focused with an occasional use of vibrato. His performance sounds free and easy. Recommended.<sup>216</sup>

In a review of a recording by the Amici Ensemble for the *American Record Guide*, Steven Ritter cites his attachment to the Transatlantic Trio’s recording of d’Indy: “My previous favorite has been the Transatlantic Trio on 4Tay (with Eric Mandat-May/June 1998), coupled with a lovely Brahms Clarinet Trio. This one is awfully close to that, with no significant differences, and I have since found other Brahms that may supplant the 4Tay, fine as it is. But I would not want to be

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<sup>215</sup>. Karen Danessa, “Compact disc reviews: Transatlantic Trio -- Johannes Brahms: Trio in A Minor, Op. 114; Vincent d’Indy: Trio in B flat Major, Op. 29 (Eric Mandat, clarinet; Ivan Bezprozvanovs, cello; Peteris Plakidis, piano) (4-Tay).,” *The Clarinet* 26 (June 1999): 73.

<sup>216</sup>. Ibid.

without their D'Indy.”<sup>217</sup> John Lambert of *Fanfare* magazine claims that both recordings “easily rank with the best.”<sup>218</sup>

The Transatlantic Trio has performed throughout the United States, Europe and Asia. Though the members span the Atlantic Ocean in physical distance, they easily fall into musical sync with each other even after spending more years apart. The same is true of the members of one of Mandat’s other performing ensembles, the Tone Road Ramblers. The Tone Road Ramblers is a sextet of musicians from across the United States that performs improvisation, complex scores and jazz. The ensemble has an annual residency with the Ragdale Foundation, where they create music every summer for two weeks at the arts colony north of Chicago. Many years they will also have a weeklong residency at a university. The group has been together since 1981, and Mandat joined in 1989. The other members include John Fonville on flute, Ray Sasaki on trumpet, Morgan Powell on trombone, Jim Staley on trombone and Steve Butters on percussion. Their music embraces an extensive variety of styles, much like Mandat’s compositions for clarinet, with influences that include jazz, world music, microtonal music and much more.<sup>219</sup>

Besides commissioning three works over the years, the group performs only music that they write for themselves. Mandat’s explanation of a term coined

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<sup>217</sup>. Steven E. Ritter, “Bruch: “8 Pieces,” D’Indy: Clarinet Trio,” *American Record Guide* 69, no. 1 (January/February 2006): 92-93.

<sup>218</sup>. John Lambert, “Classical Recordings,” *Fanfare - the Magazine for Serious Record Collectors* 21 (1998): 61.

<sup>219</sup>. Brian Wilson, The Tone Road Ramblers: Taking Music Outside the Box, <http://www.carbondalerocks.com/node/45652> (accessed July 20, 2011).

by the ensemble underscores one method in which the heavily improvised ensemble operates: “We always talk about taking pieces which are highly composed and structured and tight and kind of loosen them up. So we have a term for the group, kind of like the equivalent of the Volkswagen term ‘Farfegnugen’; it is ‘Loosentighten.’”<sup>220</sup> Mandat started as a jazz major at North Texas before changing his emphasis, and the rest of the Tone Road Ramblers also have backgrounds in jazz. Mandat attributes his ability to listen and react in the moment in part to his experience in jazz, and relishes the spontaneous aspect of chamber music in general.<sup>221</sup> Each member of the group is a skilled improviser, which allows each performer to take the music in a completely new direction in a moment. Mandat says that this forces the rest to react and build just as quickly, keeping everyone “fresh and aware that there are always more possibilities.”<sup>222</sup> As Ann Starr points out in an article about the group, the free improvisation is far from chaotic. “The tunes are tunes, recognizable as such, coherent, and witty. Without confirmation that they are improvisations, few would even accept the fact that there are no scores behind them.”<sup>223</sup> Despite releasing a number of recordings, Mandat’s ideal for an audience listening to the Tone Road Ramblers perform is to “experience without the burden of memory.”<sup>224</sup> Remove any frame

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<sup>220</sup>. Masserini, *The Compositional Techniques of Eric Mandat and an Analysis of Tricolor Capers and Folk Songs*, 75.

<sup>221</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>222</sup>. Oakes, “*Eric Mandat’s Style and Compositional Process for Solo Clarinet Music*”, 24.

<sup>223</sup>. Starr, *Off the Charts: The Tone Road Ramblers at Work*.

<sup>224</sup>. Ibid.



of reference for comparison, and the music is enjoyed entirely in the present and immediate future.

## CHAPTER 6

### TRAVELS

Traveling around the world for music has allowed Mandat “to be even more free and more quick to listen and accept and absorb influences that are different.”<sup>225</sup> Travels have also helped him realize “how many things are the same, the way people live and interact with each other, have similar daily needs and family relationships.”<sup>226</sup> He relishes the combination of expanded universal perspective and personal perspective that his travels have provided.

Mandat’s first visit to Latvia made a particularly lasting impact on his life, musical and otherwise. He was not part of the scheduled faculty exchange between SIU Carbondale and Riga, but when another faculty member backed out after a shooting in Riga during January of 1991, Peteris Plakidis (the pianist who later would form *The Transatlantic Trio* with Mandat and had visited Carbondale in the Fall of 1990) suggested that Mandat visit instead.<sup>227</sup> Mandat provided a brief history of music in Latvia while discussing the country’s prominent clarinetists in an article for *The Clarinet* in 1993. Latvia had been oppressively controlled by other countries essentially until 1991, with brief breaks in history. Riga, the capital city, was the most important musical center between Poland and St. Petersburg in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but musicians faced many challenges, including

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<sup>225</sup>. Eric Mandat, phone interview by author, Carbondale.

<sup>226</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>227</sup>. Eric Mandat, interview by author, Champaign.

very limited repertoire and resources.<sup>228</sup> When Mandat visited in 1991, Latvia was at the tail end of the Soviet era, technically beyond the Soviet control, but in practical terms still under its influence:

People were reluctant in public to speak completely freely. People seemed to have an incredible ESP developed amongst themselves where they didn't need to speak, because the ancient language was banned.”<sup>229</sup> At times, Mandat felt he could sense people communicating without using words, and Déjà vu experiences increased in Latvia. When he performed, he felt the energy coming back at him from the audiences, something he never had experienced prior to his travels in Latvia. Mandat feels that this energy catapulted him to another level in connecting with the audience. These experiences proved to be a breakthrough in how Mandat thought about everything. When he returned to the United States, he worked to find that energy that he hadn't been listening for prior to his experiences in Latvia, and he feels that his efforts have made a difference in the way he has since performed and interacted with audiences.<sup>230</sup>

Teaching in Taiwan in the summers of 1997 and 1998 also made a lasting impression. Mandat describes the way of life in Taiwan in terms of the chaotic, yet simultaneously orderly and beautiful approach they have to driving: “It looks like there would be an accident every second of every driving moment but they’re somehow so orderly and their intersections are so huge, like five times bigger than our intersections. What happens is all the cars approach the intersection at the same time, nobody stops and there’s this mash in the middle of cars going all sorts of different directions. They come out on the other side beautifully and it’s all smooth. But that’s kind of like their lives – different chaotic things happen but

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<sup>228</sup>. Mandat, “The clarinetists of the Latvian Philharmonia Orchestra.”

<sup>229</sup>. Eric Mandat, interview by author, Champaign.

<sup>230</sup>. Eric Mandat, phone interview by author, Carbondale.

they stay in tune with all that is going on around them. Then they just come out on the other side of whatever strange moment and everything is all still cool.”<sup>231</sup>

Eric credits world travel for allowing him to more easily accept and absorb the differences between individuals, cultures, and art. Travel also helped him realize how entirely similar people are to one another, from the way they interact with one another, to their daily individual needs. Mandat believes that "traveling offers a more universal viewpoint on personal perspectives, a combination that I relish.”<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>231</sup>. Eric Mandat, interview by author, Champaign.

<sup>232</sup>. Eric Mandat, phone interview by author, Carbondale.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

Eric Mandat's important contributions to the clarinet world reflect his spontaneous and intuitive approach to life in general. His playful approach to music and to life provides balance to the meditative and architectural viewpoint that he lends to his compositions, performances and teachings. While Mandat embodies the risk-taking cutting edge of a movement that experiments with extended sounds, he also embraces the traditional phrasing and sound that has worked so well for the clarinet over the past few hundred years. His music can move audiences to the point of awe, yet the down-to-earth quality inherent in Eric's personality is impossible to ignore in his purposefully accessible compositions. His creative voice is one that the clarinet world is fortunate to include as one of its finest.

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APPENDIX A  
COMPOSITIONS OF ERIC MANDAT

1. *Tricolor Capers* (1980) for solo clarinet
2. *Folk Songs* (1986) for solo clarinet
3. *The Jungle* (1989) for solo clarinet
4. *Etude for Barney* (1990) for solo clarinet
5. *Music for Clarinets* (1992–1994) for solo clarinet with clarinet ensemble
6. *Preludes, Book I* (1994) for solo clarinet
7. *Sub(t)rainS O' Strata's fearS* (1996) for solo clarinet
8. *So What Elsa's New* (1997) for 2 clarinets
9. *Chips Off the Old Block* (1999) for solo bass clarinet
10. *Ritual* (2000) for 2 clarinets
11. *Coconut Candy* (2000) for solo clarinet
12. *One Liners* (2000) for 3 clarinets
13. *Three for Two* (2001, rev. 2002) for clarinet and percussion
14. *Finger Food* (2001–2002) etudes for clarinet
15. *Dark Energy* (2002) for clarinet, voice, flute, trumpet, 2 trombones and  
percussion
16. *No Holds Barred* (2003) for flute, clarinet, violin, alto saxophone, trumpet, 2  
trombones, accordion and percussion
17. *Black Swirls* (2004) for 2 clarinets
18. *2 Cool 2 B Flat* (2005) for 2 Eb clarinets and piano
19. *Rrowzer!* (2005) for solo clarinet
20. *Peg & Hole Collide* (2006) for clarinet quartet
21. *The Moon in My Window* (2007) for solo clarinet

22. *Double Life* (2007) for solo clarinet
23. *Bipolarang* (2008) for two B-flat clarinets
24. *Four Tempers* (2009) for three clarinetists and drum set
25. *Lines, Spaces, Planes* (2010) for clarinet trio
26. *Three Hasty Studies* (2010) for B-flat clarinet ensemble
27. *Pursuits of Happiness* (2011) for clarinet sextet (E-flat, 2 B-flat, basset horn,  
and bass)
28. *Shadows from Flames* (2011) for solo clarinet and bass clarinet quartet

APPENDIX B

DISCOGRAPHY OF ERIC MANDAT

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2008

APPENDIX C

CONSENT FOR INTERVIEW FORM



The research subject agrees to be recorded and understand that the interview will be used as part of the research for my paper and that parts will be quoted in the paper with him directly attributed as the source.

The subject understands that he participates voluntarily and has the right at any time to discontinue the interview or to not answer a particular question, for any reason.

The subject will receive a copy of my finished thesis for approval purposes and has the right to deny use of any part of the interview in my paper.


There are no costs for the interview subject, nor will he receive any gratuities.

The subject may benefit from having his life and work studied as the subject of a DMA thesis, which will be available for many to read after its completion.

There appear to be no physical risks involved with the interview process.

The interview subject will receive a copy of this consent form.

I, Eric Mandat, give my consent to be interviewed by Rebecca Tout d'Alessio.

 12. Apr 2007

APPENDIX D  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD DOCUMENTATION

12/16/11

Dear Robert Spring and Rebecca Tout,

Your application "ERIC MANDAT (b. 1957): A MULTIPHONIC MEDITATION..." has been reviewed, and it has been determined that IRB oversight is not required because the study does not meet the criteria under Federal Regulations, 45 CFR Part 46 for research involving human subject participation. Good luck with your study.

Sincerely,  
Tiffany

Tiffany Dunning  
IRB Coordinator  
Office of Research Integrity and Assurance  
Center Point, 660 S. Mill Avenue Suite 315  
Arizona State University  
Tempe, AZ 85287-6111 (Mail Code 6111)  
Telephone: [480 965-6788](tel:4809656788)  
Fax: [480 965-7772](tel:4809657772)  
<http://researchintegrity.asu.edu/humans>

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS: ERIC MANDAT

Interview #1 conducted on April 12, 2007 in Champaign, IL.

Rebecca Tout d'Alessio: What is your latest activity with the Transatlantic Trio?

Eric Mandat: We haven't been together for about 3 years. The pianist was doing a sabbatical replacement at cal arts. I brought him to Carbondale and also the cellist I brought from Latvia. We did the Messiaen Quartet in Carbondale, with our violinist on the faculty, and then we got together and went back to California to do a tour.

RT: How often does your group the Tone Road Ramblers play together?

EM: We have this annual residency at an arts colony north of Chicago with the Ragdale Foundation. Every summer we get together for two weeks there. And then many years we'll also have a residency at a university somewhere, four to six days, usually, at different places. Because the group is pretty well spread out around the country, we don't get together too much in the other place. But because the group has been together so long, it only takes about 5 minutes to reconnect musically, as well as personally. The group itself has been together 26 years, and I've been with the group 18 years.

RT: Have there been any new members since you've joined?

EM: Just one, Steve Butters, the percussionist.

RT: What other performing activities have you been involved in?

EM: In the last seven years or so I've been playing pretty regularly in Chicago. I perform with the Chicago Symphony's "Music Now" Series, it's a contemporary, conducted chamber music series that was started by Augusta Read Thomas when

she became the composer-in-residence with the Chicago Symphony seven or eight years ago. So we play a lot of masterworks and premieres by great composers, with great conductors.

RT: How often do you play with them?

EM: It depends on the season, but usually 2-3 times a season. Because it's an official arm of the Chicago Symphony, those players have the first right of refusal on concerts and if they don't sign up for a particular concert, I usually get a call. The playing is so good from the first rehearsal – it sounds perfect, and then it gets better! It's really exciting to be prepared and do that.

And then there's another group I've been playing with, it's largely a string chamber group and then they add extra players as their repertoire needs but I've played a couple of concerts with them in the last couple years. Last year I did a bass clarinet part for the Ligeti Kammerkonzert, which is one of my all-time favorite pieces, and the bass clarinet part is sort of famous for being incredibly gnarly hard.

RT: How did the performance turn out?

EM: It went great! I had three weeks with the music. They called and said they couldn't find anyone willing to tackle it. It was loads of fun to do.

RT: What is the status of your latest recording project?

EM: The recording is all done and the editing is in the final stages, it's just a matter of finalizing the cover art and I have to write the text. It should be out in a couple months. It's all my own stuff and it includes most of the rest of my music that I haven't recorded before.

RT: What are your current projects beyond the fall cd release?

EM: I have a sabbatical coming up in the fall and I'm working on some compositions. I'm writing a piece for Kelly Johnson – a solo work that she'll perform in Vancouver [at the ICA festival]. I'm also playing on the Bill Smith Tribute concert in Vancouver and I'm writing a piece for that. I want to do a more extensive follow-up on my Finger Food Etude book because I liked writing them so much – I had so much fun working on them and I'm trying to work on something more introductory for slightly younger students. I have a few etudes already.

RT: Your experience performing in John Eaton's "Pocket Opera" Don Quixote sounds very interesting.

EM: It was a huge role, because I was on stage pretty much the whole time. It's singing and playing and movement. Basically I had to memorize my part and travel all around the stage and use my instrument as a sword in addition to playing it and also singing. This was all in John Eaton's sound world, which was all about microtones and quarter tones so it was challenging to sing!

RT: How long did it take you to prepare?

EM: I think I spent the better part of 3 months working it up.

RT: Do you memorize quickly?

EM: Yeah, I do. Sometimes I don't think I'm going to, but then it just sticks and I kind of surprise myself. But yeah, things stay.

RT: How many performances did all of this work result in?

EM: I think we did three performances that particular time. We presented it again a few years later. The staging was very different the second time, a little cleaner. The first time it was heavily staged and as a result, I think the end effect for a lot of audience people was that it looked a little cartoonish. I think with the more minimal staging and certainly minimal props in the second performance, it was a little more focused on the music and interaction of the individuals. I think it was a little better for me that way. And of course knowing the piece from before, it was easier to make some of the changes that I didn't do as well the first time around."

RT: Any other singing experience since high school?

EM: No.

RT: Wow, you're a risk taker, being willing to sing on stage when it's not something that you do regularly.

EM: I am. But if it's out there, and if nobody wants to do it...I know for me, I'm going to try it. The worse thing that happens is that I learn a whole bunch. And that just doesn't seem like much of a risk to me. I'll use it somewhere else. I'm very much about experiences. I try to have as many different kinds of experiences that I can so I understand what other people go through, what other people deal with, what other people think about.

RT: You seem to be drawn to the visual aspect of performance.

EM: It's not only for the audience but for our own understanding of the music and our own ability to play well. If our entire bodies are moving in the same direction, then we have a better chance of our fingers doing the right thing, our air



doing the right thing. A lot of times I'll see people who are aiming for a goal in a phrase and instead of pushing toward it they actually go the opposite direction with their bodies. I think the control of the large muscle groups is a prerequisite to the control of the small muscle groups.

RT: Some of your works dating back to your school days have involved some theatrics. Do any of your current projects involve any visual interaction?

EM: Ritual and Black Swirls have choreography that go with them. Ritual was written in 2000 but never was really performed until 2004 and then that became a companion piece to Black Swirls, which I did write in 2004. Those are about choreography. Black Swirls is a little more about acting than Ritual. Ritual is about suggesting the way that one can perceive the music as emotional interaction through the body positions that are asked for in the music. But it's not specific. Black Swirls is a little more specific in the kinds of directions or the intentions of the directions. We've never done a performance of Black Swirls using the choreography and I'm not sure the choreography is all that great, it's just something that could be added. I'm not sure that it adds much to the music, though. I tend to not want to do too much of that because I like the performers to find their own movements, their own physical movements that help inform their interpretations to an audience. I try to leave some of that open. Oftentimes I'll give a suggestion for a mood. Like Rrowzer!, my more recent solo clarinet piece, I talk about it as being a grumpy old dog, snarling at passersby and that maybe to me is enough for another performer to take and go with however they want.

RT: In the past, you mentioned disco as a source of inspiration.

EM: All my music has some direct relation to some personal thing that has been going on in my life.

RT: Continuing on the theme of movement - are you a sports fan?

EM: I like sports in general, as a spectator. I love figure skating as an analogy for music performances, for solo recitals. There are always these technical hurdles that you have to make it through, yet you have to create this flowing overall performance for people. I also use the figure skating analogy for the early days of multiphonics in composition. It sort of simulated the early days when people were doing triple jumps and in music the notes would be going around in an even flow and then everything would stop and you would hear a “whah” (ugly sound) and then the music would go on again. There were a lot of pieces that I encountered that were sort of like that because it took time for people to set up the multiphonic and then play it and then go on to the music. And it was kind of that way with figure skating when they were starting those first really heavy technical triple jumps, now quads, they’d be skating along with beautiful movement and suddenly they would stop and they’d go up and down the ice three or four times to gain speed and they’d do their triple and then they’d go back and do their routine.

RT: Why did you initially travel to Latvia?

EM: It was a general faculty exchange. I wasn’t part of the original group that was slated to go over, but there was a shooting in Riga in January of 1991 and that caused one of the members of our faculty to chicken out. Peteris, the pianist in my trio, had visited Carbondale [from Riga] the semester before and he suggested that I go instead.

RT: Do you speak Latvian?

EM: I've always liked languages and I've never had the opportunity to spend a significant amount of time in a country. It seemed like a natural way to honor any culture to try to learn some of the language. I'm not fluent now because I haven't used it in some time, but I was pretty good [when I was visiting frequently].

RT: How does Latvian relate to other languages?

EM: It's its own little branch of the Indo-European tree. It shares some similarities with Lithuanian sound and construction, but its closest relative is ancient Sanskrit. But because of hundreds of years of occupation from Germans and Swedes and Soviets, it has a lot of newer words that came from those languages. It's kind of an amalgam of those occupying countries languages as well as its own.

RT: Any other travel highlights in your life?

EM: I have really enjoyed Taiwan, in particular. I taught there for two summers, in '97 and '98. I love the people and I love the energy. People are so calmly businesslike and friendly. They do their thing and they're very straightforward with speaking their minds but always in a very pleasant way and it's a very fresh kind of culture. I really like the feeling there. It's industrious and not in an intense or stressful kind of way, it's beautiful. It sort of mirrors the way they drive. It looks like there would be an accident every second of every driving moment but they're somehow so orderly and their intersections are so huge, like five times bigger than our intersections and what happens is all the cars approach the intersection at the same time, nobody stops and there's this mash in the middle

of cars going all sorts of different directions and they come out on the other side beautifully and it's all smooth. But that's kind of like their lives – they just kind of go through and different chaotic things happen but they stay in tune with all the things that are going on around them and then they just come out on the other side of whatever strange moment is and everything is all still cool. I stayed with Bill Chen in Taipei recently at his house. I like Korea a lot, too. There's a different vibe to the people but I like the feeling there.

RT: Have you always enjoyed performing?

EM: I always enjoyed being on-stage, I always had a good time doing acting. I was in lots of plays and musicals in junior high and high school and I considered that as a major pretty strongly. I had a really good musical experience between junior and senior year in high school and decided to pursue music.

RT: What experience was that?

EM: When I was in high school, the summer between my junior and senior years, I played with a group called America's Youth in Concert. It was just one of those groups that pours musicians in – band musicians, choir musicians, orchestra musicians – and then tours them around Europe. It was a great experience for me. We spent time in Rome, Florence, Venice, Austria, Geneva, Paris, London and New York. It was a month long. It was great! That's what led me to decide I wanted to major in music.

RT: In a past interview you said that you “like order and architecture and building things.” What did you like building when you were younger?

EM: I was a lego maniac. I liked lego a lot. I wasn't way into architecture, but I did enjoy doing that. I had fun building models, too. Model cars, especially. My brother was very much involved in technical art, my father was a very good technical artist. My brother's oldest daughter is studying architecture. I think that kind of balance in construction is something that's in our family history somehow and for me it has manifested itself in composition.

RT: Was your dad musical?

EM: He would play the accordion from time to time, just for fun. But he wasn't particularly musically inclined. I have one brother and one sister, both younger. I was not always the oldest. I had an older brother who died when he was 13 and I was 11. Maybe I have a slightly different outlook on death that started to change from that experience. I'm not sure how much I can pinpoint that event...[death] is not something that I fear or worry about or have concerns about."

RT: Have you had any interesting jobs in your life not related to music?

EM: The summer after I graduated from North Texas I was a dishwasher and a busboy at the Denton County Independent Chicken Fried Steak Factory. It was kind of a weird place because the manager and his father were apparently running a drug business through the store, unbeknownst to me. The owner asked me to stay as manager and I told him that I thought I'd go to Yale, instead...Most summers I worked for my dad. He was an actuary and that's basically figuring out rates for insurance companies based on statistical information. I was calculating spreadsheets with a pencil and paper. He set the formulas up and I had to realize the results from those formulas.

RT: You seem to have a relaxed and easy approach to life - you appear to be very positive, in general.

EM: I'm very, very optimistic. There have been difficult times in my life, but I can't remember them, really, in a dwelling sort of way. Everything overall seems so good. I feel really positive in general, I would hope it's because I like experiences and life is nothing but a pile of experiences and what could be more fun than waiting for the next one to happen.

RT: Do you have children?

EM: I have one daughter, Kari [pronounced "Carrie"], and she's 24. She's been working in the Dallas area as a cosmetologist - she's actually coming back to Carbondale soon to stay in the short term. Some of her reasons for being in Dallas are no longer there.

RT: Are you still married to her mother?

EM: Yes. We've been together over 30 years. We were both students at North Texas. I was about half way through my undergrad and she was just starting her master's degree in flute performance and we were both playing in the wind ensemble together and teaching at a music store north of Denton. So we'd drive up on Saturdays with some other music students and we got to know each other that way.

RT: Is she still an active musician?

EM: She was a flutist, she hasn't played for a long time. She's the office manager for the Geography department [at Carbondale].

RT: So she also works at the university. What is the climate at SIU Carbondale?

EM: We have a lot of new faculty that have come in the last four or five years. That's one of the things that's making Carbondale really exciting right now in the school of music. So much new energy, everybody really gets along not only as colleagues, but also socially. Everybody's willing to try new stuff and so it's kind of fun to throw these things on these people and they're into it.

RT: The university seems to appreciate you - can you tell me about the award that you received in 1999?

EM: Each year they [SIU Carbondale] give an award to the outstanding teacher in the university and an award to the outstanding scholar. In 1999 I won the scholar award.

RT: How often do you play with the faculty woodwind quintet?

EM: The quintet is not very active, functioning primarily for recruiting purposes.

RT: What are some of your impressions of the town of Carbondale.

EM: It's very pretty - really nice bluffs and rock formations overlooking the Mississippi River and other places.

RT: Do you teach theory courses?

EM: They're just grad student analysis courses. One is a modified Schenkerian analysis course, the other is a post-tonal theory course.

RT: Do you teach composition?

EM: No.

RT: Tell me about "Outside the Box," the recent music festival hosted on your campus - what is your involvement?

EM: Liviu Danceanu [from Romania] was a featured guest artist - he conducted our faculty chamber players, which is a group that I run. I've been doing that about six years. It's flexible instrumentation and we put on a concert with some kind of theme every semester that involves greater or less number of the people. I didn't start the ensemble, it was started by our orchestra director because he wanted to have some chamber music activity. He was doing primarily older music, although when he first started he did a couple of the plum ensemble pieces like l'Histoire and Appalachian Spring and that was it. Then he kind of ran out of ideas and asked if I wanted to take it over. I fairly quickly moved it over into a new music and masterpieces of the 20<sup>th</sup> century music ensemble. So we've been focusing on retrospectives of several composers – including [Bernard] Rands and we had a concert in the last year featuring music of Varese. The Varese concert was not only Varese but also other composers involved with liberating sound. That was the title of the program – “Varese and the Liberation of Sound.” It included pieces by Henry Cowell and people who were influenced by Varese – James Tenney, Frank Zappa and we did the Poem Electronique and I created new visuals for the piece.

RT: I read that both Crumb and Ligeti, particularly Crumb, influenced your composition. How so?

EM: The things I liked, especially about Crumb, that I could say have sort of found their way in my music, is that the raw materials – the pitch layout, intervallic layout, the organization – is pretty strict and pretty square, and I would say that is probably true of a lot of music. I like how he clouds the “squareness”



of it with these really interesting and different timbres. And that's something I like to try to do, too. There's so many things that the clarinet can do and that we can do with the instrument...to purposely work to not be aware of those things is to purposely fight against the tendencies of the instrument. It seems to me that freedom in playing shouldn't have a lot to do with fighting, it should have a lot to do with collaboration with your instrument and balance. Achieving a common ground and understanding with your instrument about its limitations and how you can push it and how it's going to push back and how you can make that move through time in as many varied ways as possible.

RT: What other composers have influenced your musical thought?

EM: I've always been drawn to anyone in musical history who is blazing new trails and especially if history kind of proved that you couldn't really follow it up with anything because it was just so far advanced or just so different. I loved music of Gesualdo and I like Varese and I like Harry Partch and people who kind of created this sound world that nobody could really quite say was the new way to go, it was just so different that some people followed and most people just couldn't deal with it.

RT: You recorded "The Extended Clarinet" at Redlands – was Phillip Rehfeldt involved at all?

EM: No.

RT: How did you compile your fingerings for Rehfeldt's latest edition of New Directions for Clarinet?

EM: I had thought about them for myself and then he asked me to write them out more formally so he could use them in the book. I use a lot of the same fingerings for my compositions, they're the ones that seem to work easiest for me both in terms of sound and in terms of ease of fingering combinations. They're pretty much standard – independently, Michael Richards has pretty much come up with the same quarter-tone fingerings and he's done extensive study on microtonal fingerings and is really good at that.”

RT: You have spent some time with Bill Smith – what are some of your impressions of the clarinetist and composer?

EM: Bill has for more years than anybody been involved with pushing the clarinet in places that it has never been. Every time I see him he's always got something new that he's discovered that he's incorporated into a piece and he's just always completely excited and completely fresh about everything. I had a sort of extended stay and recitals and classes in Seattle a year and a half ago and it included a concert at a little gallery space that half the concert was my written music and the other half of the concert was an improv session and I asked Bill if he would play during the improv part and he said “yeah, sure!” and it was just wonderful to watch him interact. There was another young performer who ran this gallery space and was also a clarinetist – she was very good, she had a lot of energy and a lot of note ideas. We kind of think of Bill Smith as this mellow, quiet stage man who puts that perfect note in one place, but when the improv

started she had a lot to say and was getting lots of notes out and she finished her little piece and he followed it up with an almost identical revamp of what she had done but then expanded on that – it was good, totally energized – the whole performance, right from the start. And took exactly what she had and built something even better and more fiery on top of it – it was pretty impressive to me. That’s what Bill always does for me. The first time I spent any extended time with him I had a sabbatical, this was early 90s, maybe 92 or something like that. I stayed at his house for nearly a week in January and the idea was he was going to help me with my compositions – we actually never quite got to that, but we played together, improvised, experimented around with multiphonics, growl things. The best was one morning I woke up and he was already downstairs, he had newspaper all over the dining room table, he was cutting and making all kinds of things and what he was doing was cutting out a pattern for an apron or a smock where you could put little parts of the clarinet and carry them around in a movement way and sort of put the clarinet together and take it apart and have a place to store the pieces. Unbeknownst to him because he was just focused on cutting this pattern out, he put the paper on, it was from a newspaper and on the front was a full page ad from some investment firm that says “announcing a bold new concept” or something like that, and it was perfect. Then he said “get on the sewing machine” and he threw some old fabric at me and so I sewed up these little smocks and we took them to school and played together with a percussionist who was there at the school. He was always like that, everything was so exciting and fresh and new. That’s what I like about him.

RT: I read that The Jungle was a rebellion against electronics – how so and what is your experience with electronic manipulation?

EM: The particular festival that I play for, this New Music Chicago festival, of the solo performers I was the only one who didn't have electronic alterations of some fashion. So that was even more inspiration to push the piece that direction and sort of play up that difference between what other people were doing at that particular festival and me. I don't know that it was so much a trend, I guess maybe it was because a lot of people were experimenting with electronics, but for so long I've wanted to try to learn what the instrument could do on its own.

Nowadays, because of how fast and how interactive electronics are, it's more intriguing to me and I've been doing more things, improvisation things, especially with our percussionist on our faculty, using live electronic alteration, and that's been kind of fun in an improvisation setting. I would not mind learning more about it and trying to get into it a little bit. I still like that concept of complete human control of the sounds.

RT: Is there anyone who springs to mind regarding electronic music?

EM; Gerry ( Errante) has been the master at working with electronics, live electronics – more recently, that is, and before that working with pieces with prerecorded sounds and things like that. Because he spends so much time doing that, he's able to turn a kind of prerecorded tape or cd of sounds that is totally stiff because it's going to be the exact same every time, but his interaction with that makes it feel like its subservient to him all the time rather than it being totally locked in to what it is and having to react to it. So he's able to turn the electronics

around so that they're totally in service of his own style and sense of aesthetic. That's pretty amazing and there are just not many people who can do that. Of course, it's a little easier now with live electronics because you can actually trigger things to be subservient to you. But he doesn't need it.

RT: How do you feel about electronics replacing humans as "performers"?

EM: I think the inevitability of that downsizing has come to fruition, unfortunately, in a lot of places, and while there's certainly always going to be a place for live musicians, it may not be the same places they were in the past. So that's why it's important for us to be comfortable thinking about all the places there are for us, because those traditional things may not be unfolding for us in quite the same way or with quite the same ease.

RT: You seem to be fond of word play. When did that propensity first appear in the titles of your compositions?

EM: Even with Tricolor Capers, it's kind of a word play. It sounds like it's something that is real, but it's not. It sounds like it's some kind of brand name. I like sounds of words and I've experimented with moving words around and writing poetry and things like that. I like how words can mean lots of different things. I love puns, I love all kinds of word games.

RT: Has your compositional process changed much over the years?

EM: Not much, really.

RT: Do you enjoy writing multiphonics for more than one instrument at a time?

EM: Multiphonics for multiple instruments are complex at best. The sounds just don't come out the same way and they aren't as effective for the audiences, it's a

lot to take in and discern when you have 3 or 4 people. For the players, it's hard to make the subtle changes that are necessary to maintain the balance of the pitches when you have all that extra sound around you.

RT: How were you able to study at such a young age with Richard (Dick) Joiner?

EM: Well, he taught a lot of young kids. He was great that way - that was the thing he liked to do. To my knowledge it wasn't because I was good or anything, it was because my parents called him and he said yes. But I had studied the summer before with a clarinetist who was playing with the Colorado Philharmonic, which has since become the National Repertory Orchestra. We had a lot of fun together and he encouraged my mom to call someone in town, and maybe he knew of Dick Joiner and suggested that she call him.

RT: What brought you to North Texas for your undergraduate studies?

EM: I went to North Texas partly because my teacher was good friends with Lee Gibson. Dick Joiner and Lee Gibson were students together at Eastman as undergrads. North Texas was great because it was such a big school so there were lots of playing things going on. Surprisingly enough, there were still opportunities - you know, oftentimes at a big school you're just a number tucked into the bottom of a section, but there were all kinds of composers in the school of music and nobody to play their music - nobody was doing it! Ed [Snyder, an older clarinet student] was good at it - he was very energetic and a really fun guy and he helped me get sort of involved experimenting with new sounds because I heard him do a lot of things. It was just an open atmosphere for experimenting because composers were always glad to have someone play their music, and for me it was

an opportunity to be on stage and I could try out some of these weird pieces I had found in the store and at the library. I could just put together a recital on my own – nobody was telling me I couldn't, so I just did it.

RT: What did you learn from the wealth of performance experience that you created for yourself?

EM: There were a lot of things I learned about what works and what doesn't work when one's on stage and how to help a performance be better, or to try and help squeeze the most out of a new composition by someone who is still in the learning process as I was and still am. You're learning about the construction of music and where the construction may have been stronger, and figuring out the places where the music may have been less strong and what you can do as a performer to try to help bridge between the strong sections and the places that may not be as strong. And so that was very fun, a great learning process.

RT: Tell me about your clarinet teachers... Dick Joiner in Denver, Lee Gibson at North Texas, Keith Wilson at Yale, Stanley Hasty for 2 summers at Eastman and Charles Neidich for one year at Eastman. I can easily find different features of each of those people that I try to think about in my own teaching. From Dick Joiner, the couple things that I remember from him were that he was so kind and patient and stuck with you all the time. That was the really big thing and I wanted to try to be patient when I was teaching. And the other thing that I learned, and it was more about playing, but also about the effect that he had on me and the way I wanted to try and affect students of my own, was that, I remember one time in particular he came down for the lesson into his little basement studio and he was

bouncing all around and he said, “wow, the orchestra gets to play the Barber of Seville Overture again this week,” and you know he must have played it a hundred times, but he was so excited.

RT: No sarcasm in that statement whatsoever?

EM: No, no, he couldn't wait, because he loved the piece! And I thought, man, that's where it's at to be able to play a piece a hundred times and still get excited like it was your very first time ever having the chance to play that. That made such an impact on me that I wanted to do my best to try and show other students how much I enjoyed doing what I was doing. That influenced me a lot. I thought about that a lot and I try to keep that in mind when I'm teaching. From Lee Gibson, he was just the master of sub-phrasing and parsing out a phrase to its tiniest degree; making a note move two or three directions, and it was so valuable to me. It wasn't really 'turn on the faucet, turn off the faucet.' It was all about movement and shape, and shapes within shapes...that kind of layering of phrases was really exciting to me. I wanted to try to do that and try to help students understand how we can move our air to make a more married kind of sound. Two main things that I got from Keith Wilson – one was that the music world isn't only about the practice room. Up until that time that's what I thought was going to help me to break into the professional world, practice, practice, practice. But there was much more than that – it was connecting with other people, learning to play chamber music together with people who you liked...So it was all about being visible as much as it was being sequestered, and I think that was a big change for me from the way I had been thinking. I was always fairly gregarious,



so that wasn't difficult, it was just a completely different way of thinking about how to approach my instrument and how to get to the next level. The other thing that really stuck with me is his loyalty to his institution, because he went to every single concert, it seemed. I don't think there was a concert I attended at Yale that he wasn't at – he was at a whole lot more than I was, and I went to most of them. He was always there, every little student performance, every faculty performance, every big ensemble performance... Keith Wilson could be counted on to be there and to really care about his school. I wanted to make sure that I felt that way about wherever I was. Stanley Hasty made me think about talking about things in an efficient way to students. He was very good about black and white – 'when you're playing a trill, this is Bb and this is C'. It was very straight and there was black and white about how to approach thinking. It helped me hone in fairly quickly on what the essence of a problem was rather than trying to get too quick too early into tiny nuances – those will come later, but first set out the major issues quickly.

Charlie Neidich taught me the value of spontaneity and to always be engaged intuitively in what you are doing, because even in the most well rehearsed performances there are things that are going to happen that you're going to have to react to spontaneously. We were working on Shulamit Ran's Monologue one time and he'd have me play a phrase and he'd say, "Well, that's okay, why don't you try it this way" and it was way different than what I was doing and it was pretty interesting and I hadn't really thought about that. So I tried to imitate that and I'd play it through and he'd say "well, you know, that's okay but maybe you

ought to try it this way” and then he’d play another version which was completely different than his past one and completely different than my first one and still sounded pretty cool and so he opened up all kinds of possibilities for how to think and unfold a piece of music, and as long as you maintained an integrity and internal memory about what you were doing you could pretty much build whatever you wanted. That was liberating and also challenging at the same time.

RT: As a clarinet teacher, what would you like your students to primarily learn from you?

EM: Mostly, I’m more interested to see that people learn how to think creatively, whether it’s ultimately going to be utilized for music or not. That’s a crystal ball we don’t have to see. It seems like the best thing we can do is to try to help people expand their way of thinking as much as possible and to feel good about lots of different things. One of the travesties of applied music teaching is when a teacher forces a student to track a very specific, narrow path to secure a specific job goal. What it means is that the student oftentimes doesn’t get a chance to experiment and learn other things or to feel good about certain other kinds of creative activities. If, for example, that narrow goal doesn’t present itself, after a little awhile sometimes it’s easy to get discouraged. That shouldn’t be, because these people are great, creative minds – they need to feel good about being creative and experimenting and being involved with all of the different things that artistic life is and not just one track. I’m a big fan of helping people be creative. I really think that people who are comfortable doing different things will ultimately be more successful in the long run. I’ve found that to be true with a lot of my former

students, because they had a lot of things that they were interested in and pursued a lot of different avenues for being creative, they felt comfortable when something came up that they could be involved in and usually it ultimately led to something else that led to something else and next thing they knew they were playing in an orchestra, too, and all those things gelled and they felt happy along the way because they were building something that included all the things they enjoyed.

RT: You mentioned the term “defocusing” in one of your articles – what do you mean by that?

EM: Defocusing is simply, in the case of multiphonics, blowing in between two regions of the instrument into overtone groups and defocusing in general, in standard playing, has to do, in a technical sense, with peeling off overtones in the sound so that it allows you to have another color. If you’re playing with another instrument, this could mean allowing their color to predominate and yours to tuck in better, essentially melting into the sound of the piano or melting into the sound of the horn, for example. Rather than being the clarinetist against the pianist, each instrument comes in and out of the sound a bit more freely.

RT: Is that a central aspect of your teaching?

EM: Yes, the concept of having students think about ways to blend in or change colors to move the music from one plane to another.

RT: What set-up do you use for playing?

EM: I’m a real traditionalist in lots of ways. There are lots of things that I think are really critical that are very traditional in terms of music and my own playing.

I'm all about Beethoven and Bach and Brahms – I love those people a lot. My own playing set-up is about as square as it gets. I'm playing on this old Chedeville mouthpiece. Rick Sayer medium facing. My basic approach to embouchure is extremely traditional. I don't change those things and a lot of the things that traditional music is all about are really valuable even when you're doing new music things so I don't necessarily throw that stuff out. I just like seeing what else can come out of that. I don't feel like I need to throw out the past just to validate a future.

RT: Thank you so much for sharing your thoughts and stories.

EM: Thank you.

Phone interview conducted on June 6, 2010 in Carbondale, IL.

Rebecca Tout d'Alessio: Was Tricolor Capers written as an assignment for a composition class or a theory class at Yale (if so, who was the teacher?)?

Eric Mandat: No, it wasn't written for a class - I wrote it out of frustration with not being able to get out of a set track of coursework. The piece began in the practice room, and I didn't involve teachers in my work on Tricolor Capers.

RT: Was that the first piece that you wrote that developed fully?

EM: I had written and performed a little Sonata for unaccompanied clarinet.

Tricolor Capers was the first piece of mine that felt "good." I still have the Sonata but do not play it anymore.

RT: In what depth did you study composition, if at all, at any of these schools?

EM: I took lessons for credit at a couple schools, at Yale with graduate student Henry Kucharzyk. At Eastman, I took a composition course taught by Samuel Adler.

RT: Did you learn composition from John Eaton?

EM: No.

RT: Did Charles Neidich have an impact on your composition beyond inspiring the ending for Folk Songs?

EM: I played Folk Songs for Neidich, and Neidich always had intuitive opinions to offer. We had long discussions about music in general, including compositional style. Neidich offered compositional suggestions that I ultimately didn't implement.

RT: Were there any other professors who made an impact on your composing?

EM: I took "Comprehensive Musicianship" with Martin Mailman at North Texas. The course covered music organization and included some small assignments in composition. Mailman was very supportive of experimentation in music, which I appreciated.

RT: Did you study composition with Robert Morris (or did you just take Current Practices with him)?

EM: I took the course "Current Practices," an introduction to music composition for performers, with Robert Morris one summer at Eastman. Morris thought very broadly about music and was able to draw connections between styles and genres that had not occurred to me. What Morris offered made a lot of sense and made finding further musical connections easier. The exploration of relationships between different types of music was introduced to me by Morris. Folk Songs began in Morris' class, and he wrote a note on the assignment that I should send it out to publishers, which was encouraging. Morris was mathematically inclined and recognized architectural organization immediately, which was exciting to me.

RT: Were there any other professors with whom you studied composition?

EM: While in residence at Eastman, I had weekly private compositions lessons for one semester with Warren Benson. I was working on Folk Songs at the time, and Benson thought I would have a hard time writing for a "journeyman" performer, the average performers who purchase music. Benson spoke of past experiences of his own in which performers would not play difficult music, but I realized that my motivation for writing music was different from a professional

composer. I didn't want to compose for the average clarinet player. Benson worked on notational issues with me, and he made sure that I wasn't purposely making the piece unnecessarily challenging.

RT: When you were organizing recitals in undergrad, of student composer pieces and "weird pieces" you came across on your own in libraries and stores - was Lee Gibson involved? Was he into new music?

EM: Not a lot himself, but he was open to his students exploring, and offered valuable suggestions. Lee Gibson helped me work on the pieces, but he didn't help choose the repertoire. I performed Contrasts by Bartok without Gibson knowing ahead of time. Gibson mentioned that the piece was very difficult and was surprised that I put it together on his own, but he didn't really scold me. The violinist was an undergrad from Colorado who I knew from my home area (not same HS). The pianist was a talented grad student.

RT: Can you tell me any more about how/if meditation has played a role in your life?

EM: Although I don't meditate in the traditional sense, music does transport me into a frame of mind that is not unlike a meditative state. There's a feeling I get when I play that I can see outside of regular linear time. Any time that music is involved in my life, I don't recognize the passage of linear time, [the kind of time] that makes people anxious of deadlines and other matters. Even from my youngest stages, I always felt so relaxed and happy when music was happening. That feeling was definitely associated with music.

RT: The following are listed on your cv, but not listed in earlier documents - can you provide some background information on each? Satellites, for six to eight B-flat clarinets, 1982?

EM: This was written for a performance, newly teaching at Carbondale, for all of the students to perform together. A lot of these works were written for a singular purpose.

RT: Fried by Friday and Steam Room, both for jazz quintet in both composed in 1984?

EM: That was for a faculty jazz quintet. I played with them for more than 10 years, both sax and clarinet. I would have preferred more adventurous music, which is part of the reason why I wrote a bunch of music. Frank Stemper [pianist and member], also wrote music.

RT: Smoke and Steel, for bass voice and piano in 1985?

EM: This was never performed, it was written as an assignment for Robert Morris.

RT: Movement, for clarinet and piano in 1985?

EM: Also an assignment.

RT: Prelude, for chamber ensemble in 1985?

EM: Another assignment.

RT: Elegy, for jazz duo, written in 1985?

EM: That was written for the SIU faculty.

RT: Passages, for clarinet, piano, and percussion, written in 1986?



EM: That was for my lecture recital at Eastman titled "Inner Galaxies in the Inner Universe of Music" - exploring microtones, frequency relationships at inaudible levels between pitches and rhythms, larger temporal organization and pitch, numerical relationships... Very fun to do. Also on program was the second movement of Anthony Elton's clarinet duet. Difference tones made up a trio, with canonic elements in the piece. Xenakis' Charisma for Clarinet and Cello, with durational micro elements to delay with frequency three times per second.

RT: El Acabose, for jazz sextet, written in 1987?

EM: I composed this for a faculty ensemble.

RT: Flotation, for piano and soloists, written in 1987?

EM: Also for a faculty jazz ensemble.

RT: The Last Outpost, for jazz quintet, written in 1987?

EM: Faculty piece.

RT: Pass/Out, for jazz quintet, in 1987?

EM: Faculty piece.

RT: Music Box, for solo clarinet, in 1989?

EM: Part of this did live on. It started out as semi-improvisational, with some set features. A lot of it made it into Moon in my Window.

RT: Blue Tango, for jazz sextet, in 1990?

EM: Faculty.

RT: Blowout, for jazz sextet, in 1990?

EM: Faculty.

RT: Talu, for violin, clarinet, cello, and piano, written in 1991?

EM: This was from my first trip to Latvia. I wanted to write something for the people who I spent a lot of time with. Fun performance, done.

RT: Can you add anything interesting about your more celebrated works? Folk Songs, for example?

EM: I am constantly surprised by long life of this piece. Students have performed it in competitions in recent past. The judges are surprised - it maintains its freshness despite all these years.

RT: The Jungle?

EM: This was really difficult when I was writing it. I developed stamina while writing this. Nothing had challenged me at that level like that piece in regards to stamina. Have been able to maintain that stamina ever since, when I pull it out. This piece stemmed from wanting to have something that could travel from one sound world to another without having to stop, with seamless transitions.

RT: Etude for Barney?

EM: I wrote this piece for Barney Childs on his 64th birthday, at the request of Phil Rehfeldt. It was supposed to be part of a large collection put together by Rehfeldt. It was fun to dream up all of the character traits that Barney possessed. He was the opposite of politically correct. He was so wonderful in going against social norms. On the surface he had a raw personality, and didn't often show his sensitive and caring side; these oppositional kinds of things are reflected in the music.

RT: Music For Clarinets?

EM: I started this for a clarinet ensemble in Latvia. They didn't have the instruments, though...eventually Howard Klug was interested in including the piece as a part of the clarinet choir festival at the University of Illinois, where he was teaching before moving to Indiana. After the festival, Howard requested that three more movements be added to the existing movement. Klug's students performed the entire work at the 1995 ClarinetFest in Chicago, with Klug conducting. The piece was thirty-five minutes. It's not performed regularly because it's difficult and hasn't had the right exposure. Bob Spring recorded it and it should be released soon, which might give it more life. The organizers for next year's ClarinetFest in Northridge purchased it, so maybe...

RT: Sub(t)rainS O' Strata's fearS?

EM: This was written for Bob Spring by commission. It includes lots of play in lots of different places. I'm always surprised that someone has heard it and they like it a lot. It's really crazy hard, so when someone tackles it they really play it well. It receives lots of play on the East Coast, including audition situations.

RT: So What Elsa's New?

EM: This was written for Elsa Verdehr...the piece is already short, but for a potpourri concert some performers later needed to cut it further. The shortened version was performed at Domaine Forget, and I liked it!

RT: Chips off the old block?

EM: SIU had finally purchased a good bass clarinet, so I wrote this.

RT: Ritual and Black Swirls?

EM: These are companion pieces in that they're both involving the personal element more than other pieces, with Ritual performed quite a bit, often without choreography. I would like people to make their own choreography. I have performed this often, with and without choreography. I prefer the works with movement, and would like performers to incorporate original choreography, but I realize this tough and would create more performance discomfort for many. Black Swirls is more difficult, so it's not performed as often. Most of my music tends to stem from a lot of different influences; if there are personal elements, I'm always trying to transform those elements into something that applies to other people.

RT: Coconut Candy?

EM: This won an award at SIU. I was giving a presentation and performance, so this was a representation of my current work at the time. It includes lots of subtle structural elements, experimenting with different types of symmetrical construction.

RT: One Liners?

EM: I composed this for two recent [SIU] graduates - Sean Osborne, who earned his Master of Music, and Michael Norsworthy, who graduated with his Bachelor's Degree. I perform the work with them at the Okalahoma ClarinetFest. Sean has an Irish background, so the first movement has some Irish character infused into it with jig forms. We traded off leadership roles to give each strong player a shot.

RT: Three for Two?

EM: Bob Spring commissioned this with JB [Smith]. Nielsen's Clarinet Concerto influenced the first movement. The second movement is based on wind chimes

called Chimes of Persia - they could be major or minor depending on the wind, and I liked that possibility of both light and dark. I tried to see how well I could challenge the percussionist in the last movement. All of us who tried to play it hurt ourselves. Afterward I asked around and discovered that JB hurt himself, I hurt myself, the percussionist who performed with me injured himself...all from practicing. Everyone who has played it has complained about it. A "practice with care" warning should accompany the score.

RT: Did Bob Spring injure himself?

EM: No, not Bob.

RT: Finger Food?

EM: These address a combination of issues my students were having technically.

I tried to create something that people would want to play, etudes that were musical and short.

RT: Dark Energy?

EM: We performed this three or four times: here [at SIU], U of I, Ragdale Foundation... This is the first year in 17 or 18 years that we aren't at the Ragdale Foundation. It's tougher for schedules to fit in 2 weeks. We don't have 2 weeks of stuff to do at an artists colony, because we are no longer learning each others languages. We also are no longer traveling a lot together. This year will have a shorter session in Urbana at Morgan Powell's house, and at Ray Sataki's place nearby. It's typically one week in the first part of August. We just did a recording last year with Dark Energy, plus at least another cd's worth of improv. We're trying to decide what to do with the it, it seems that the vocals seem overbearing

in terms of time on each piece. Another residency next spring will be in Carbondale, part of the New Music Festival, celebrating the group's 30th anniversary.

RT: No Holds Barred?

EM: This hasn't been recorded and never will be - a piece with a singular purpose - event - residency at University of Texas at Austin. Loud raucous performance. Done.

RT: 2 Cool 2 B Flat?

EM: Ani Berberian mentioned the possibility of writing a piece for two Eb clarinets, and I had wanted to do that for a while. A Tokyo performance loomed and last minute finishes were rushed, but the performance went well. I think I still like the piece, but I haven't heard it again. Even though a few people have performed it, the work hasn't been performed a lot. I'd like to bring it back. Most of the movements are about the funny things that the Eb clarinet can do.

RT: The score for Rrowzer! suggests "like an old grouchy dog snarling at passers-by. If you wish to circular breathe, please consider waiting until after m. 62 or even after m. 70."

EM: An actual dog didn't inspire this, but I worked on it at Ragdale. It's easy to play loudly and wrapped up in sound, growly sounding. Because it was in Ragdale, I was doing a lot of improv and kept that energy going in this work.

RT: Peg & Hole Collide?

EM: I wrote this at Howard Klug's request, who knew he'd have a spot at the Atlanta ClarinetFest for himself, me and two of his former students, Jorge Montilla and Min Hoe Ye. I composed for the interesting personalities involved - stereotypes about people in their positions, with music emerging despite all of the oppositional forces and personalities. Klug has the tough teach, barking role, while Jorge, who is from Venezuela, has the more fiery personality and Min Hoe Ye, who taught in Arkansas for a year before Kelly Johnson and is now in Taiwan, represents a quieter personality. I am the outsider: infiltrating and instigating throughout the piece.

RT: Double Life?

EM: This was for Bill Smith, as a tribute to him for the program at the Vancouver ClarinetFest. The first movement is based on his double life as a legit composer and great jazz player. The clarinets play separately and then together. The second movement is about Bill's constant experimentation. One time at the Bowling Green Festival, when we were both visitors, he went to grocery store, looking for an aluminum can for the right sound. Another time, at his house, he was cutting up newspaper for a tunic that had pockets so that he could put sections of the clarinet on his body. Then, using material and a sewing machine, Bill made tunics for an informal walk-around with parts of the instruments in use. He had nonstop creativity. This piece is about that. The second movement is particularly about that. The idea of an extra extension in the instrument is to give the flavor of him using lots of extras, even though he didn't use extensions. I used approximate quotes and rhythmic ideas from one of his Brubeck tunes - Blue Rondo Ala Turk.

"Damn I hate that tune" is what Bill said, so I snuck a quote of that into the second movement. It was fun to write a tribute to his great personality.

RT: Bipolarang?

EM: This was commissioned by Bob Spring and Jana Starling. It's a game of opposites: fight, then shift gears as fast as possible. One part is a quarter step out of tune for a good portion of it. Both clarinet parts are tough, especially Bob's.

RT: Four Tempers for three clarinetists and drum set?

EM: I wrote this for the Clarinetfest in Portugal. It's a combination of a clarinet quartet from Portugal that gave a show in Kansas City with a percussionist. They did mostly cheesy tunes, all memorized with non-stop showmanship, eighty minutes of hysterical excitement. After they finished, the Edmund Welles bass clarinet quartet came out to perform, and their sound is pretty gnarly. They gave an exact opposite show, with jeans and long hair, sitting in a circle facing inward, hunched over their clarinets like 4 wizards over a cauldron. It was a really exciting performance, so good and energetic. The idea behind [Four Tempers] is lots of energy, some anger, prominent bass clarinet, burning up with anger, buildings burning down, aggression versus aggression, switching sides, big swirl about anger... But it's not a political statement. I included the drummer because of the Portugal group, and also because I wanted some more sounds available.

RT: Did the passing of your parents affect your music (mom in 1994, dad in 2008)?

EM: No. I tend not to have compositions be a personal commentary on my life.



RT: I have quotes from reviews and other articles, but what are some of your personal performance highlights?

EM: Latvia the first time was particularly amazing from a performance standpoint. It was the tail of the Soviet era, technically beyond that but it was practically still that time period...people were reluctant in public to speak completely freely. People seemed to have an incredible ESP developed amongst them where they didn't need to speak. At times I felt I could hear people communicating without using words. I had de ja vu experiences in Latvia. When I played, I felt the energy coming back at me from the audiences, something I never had experienced prior to that. How an audience can have that kind of energy directed at you...it catapulted me to another level in connecting with an audience. It served as a breakthrough in how I thought about everything, and I worked hard afterward to find that energy in other places, where I hadn't been listening for it well enough before. It made a difference in the way I performed and interacted with audiences.

RT: Will you share any personal anecdotes or triumphs?

EM: I remember sending a recording grant in early 80s, I included Tricolor Capers and other works in the application. A committee met and they didn't get it, and they said they really didn't think that was music. This turned me off to grant writing. I stopped trying to appeal to outside sources for acceptance. I am careful now not to just crank out music that comes easily to me, and I don't want to become too mainstream. I want to stay true to my musical vision, despite taking on commissions.

RT: Can you tell me more about your Uof I exchange?

EM: It was a couple of short residencies. I would go up and do lectures, performances. The idea was to generate new compositions from students there. Over the course of the year I visited for short time in fall, then short time in spring. Didn't really generate new pieces. Not enough push.

RT: Latvia, Taiwan , Korea...how much has world travel impacted your life and the lives of your family members?

EM: It allowed me to be even more free and more quick to listen and accept and absorb influences that are different. It's also helpful in making me realize how many things are the same, the way people live, interact with each other, our daily needs are similar, family relationships... Traveling offers a more universal viewpoint on personal perspectives, a combination that I relish.

RT: Favorite pastimes with your family - sports, wildlife, photography, reading, movies, television, hiking, swimming, sailing, skiing, cooking...?

EM: I like working in the yard, gardening and landscaping. Cooking Indian, exotic Mexican, Thai - Olise is a great improviser, while I like to follow recipes. I don't watch a whole lot of movies, though I like older movies, and I watch sports on tv. I like to watch the Olympics, tennis, not as much football and basketball as I used to watch when my dad was alive. I have played tennis since junior high, though I'm not a natural talent. I like to hike, especially in Colorado. Olise did a lot of camping growing up, but she burned out on it. My parents were non-campers, so I was okay with not camping, though we took Carrie on a couple camping trips when she was younger.

RT: Has religion and/or spirituality played an important role in your life and/or the life of family members?

EM: I like to keep this area private. The Lutheran Church merged with another one in town, which led to less activity in my family. The structure and discipline aspect of it has had an impact, contributing to a belief and focus on recognizing goodness in the world and working to make it better. I'm generally not excited about rules and regulations.

RT: Thank you so much for sharing more about yourself.