

# Jack STAMP

**CHAMBER MUSIC, VOLUME TWO: MUSIC FOR CLARINET QUARTET**  
LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY: SONG-CYCLE FOR SOPRANO AND CLARINET QUARTET  
CONVERGENCE FOR CLARINET QUARTET AND PERCUSSION QUARTET  
CONCERT PIECE FOR CLARINET QUARTET AND PIANO  
EL CARISO: IN MEMORIAM BRUCE LEEK  
RONDO ALLA BCP  
PRELUDE 1983  
FRAGMENTS

**Barcelona Clarinet Players**  
**North Texas Percussion Quartet**  
**Lauren Shuyler, soprano**  
**Albert Guinovart, piano**  
**North Texas Wind Symphony**  
**Eugene Migliaro Corporon, conductor**

# CREATING A REPERTOIRE FOR CLARINET QUARTET

by Jack Stamp

Since my retirement from full-time collegiate teaching in 2015, I have diverted much of my compositional activities from wind-band works to chamber-music pieces. But I never dreamt that this album might be on the horizon.

I first met the Barcelona Clarinet Players (BCP) in spring 2018 while I was serving as producer for recording projects of Eugene Migliaro Corporon and the North Texas Wind Symphony of works for clarinet quartet and wind band which featured the BCP. Eugene Corporon had met the quartet while guest-conducting in Barcelona and upon his return home immediately embarked on securing funding to bring the ensemble to the USA and record them with his first-rate wind-group. During the session we became friends and exchanged e-mails and ‘friended’ each other on Facebook. Then the pandemic kicked in, and our communication became dormant. As we slowly emerged from the horrors of those years and began live music again, I posted something on Facebook about a recent wind-band premiere. One of the responses to my post was a comment from Manuel Martínez, one of the BCP clarinetists: ‘Where’s our piece?’ I immediately contacted him to ask if he was serious. He insisted that he was, and the result was *Fragments* for clarinet quartet, a five-movement work of contrasting movements. The first, ‘Shards of Glass’ [2], is based upon wide, angular intervals in syncopation offset by harmonic clusters. The second, ‘Chrestomathy’ [3], is a passacaglia led by the bass clarinet, with each of the remaining members adding his distinctive contrapuntal statement. There is a brief chordal interlude for three of the players halfway through the movement, both to break up the counterpoint and to give the bass clarinetist a short break. The movement is in an arch form and reverses itself in a new key-centre, after the chordal section, to end with the opening statement of the bass clarinet. ‘Whispering Particles’ [4] begins

with the players intercepting one another's semiquaver line, tossing it about with seamless energy, only to collide in an awkward  $\frac{5}{8}$  dance. The fourth movement, 'A Sliver of Light' [5], is a chorale prelude written in a hymn style that reflects the harmonies of one of my favourite American composers, Vincent Persichetti. The final movement, 'Morsel Dance' [6], explores a syncopated rhythm created by the alternation of short and long notes. The 'jazz-rock' theme receives many treatments, including canon and quintal harmony.

After the premiere of *Fragments* in April 2022, the BCP players said that they would like to record an album of my music – the problem now being that I had only written them one piece! I then set forth composing works for clarinet quartet with other instruments. The first such work, *Convergence* for clarinet quartet and percussion quartet [1], opens this album. As percussion was my primary instrument, this work was a natural first step in creating a repertoire for clarinet quartet. The piece begins with African and Latin American percussion instruments, each with its own ostinato rhythm, which blurs the metre. The clarinets enter with an exotic-sounding melody which is taken through various processes, including a canon and a fugato. The second section of the piece is ballad-like, with the percussionists moving to mallet instruments. The melody is highlighted by a repeating rhythm of dotted quaver/semiquaver/crotchet, which gives it a dignified presentation. The third section is a samba in which two of the percussionists remain on keyboards while the others go back to their Latin instruments. This section is an interplay between the two quartets which features improvisation. True to my fascination with form (I was blown away by Dvořák's 'New World' Symphony way back in 1975), both themes from the previous two sections make a brief appearance as the samba theme drives to an exciting conclusion.

On 1 June 2023, I lost a dear friend, Bruce Leek. Bruce was an established recording engineer. In his long career, he produced, engineered and/or mastered over 16,000 recordings, which garnered more than 30 Grammy Awards and countless nominations. He was responsible for recording all of the albums of my music as well as those of my collegiate ensemble up until 2015. In fact, it was he who recorded the Barcelona Clarinet Players with the North Texas Wind Symphony back in 2018, the impetus for

this recording. I have taken his death very hard; as a composer, I grieve by writing a piece in memory of the individual. Knowing that this recording session was planned, I set out to write a clarinet quartet in memory of Bruce [7]. For years, he lived in a small village in California called El Cariso, a place where we must have worked on 50 recording projects. The brief work is mournful and highlighted by a repeated rhythmic figure of a dotted crotchet, quaver and quaver triplet.

Though I have established myself as a composer of wind-band music, my favourite medium to write for, truth be told, is solo voice with accompaniment. As I continued to explore the options of music for clarinet quartet, I decided to compose a song-cycle on the poetry of one of my favourite poets, Percy Bysshe Shelley. I had set a poem of Shelley's nearly three decades ago: *Love's Philosophy* for soprano and piano. I began by reworking that early song for soprano and clarinet quartet, and it became the basis for my cycle *Love's Philosophy*. The first setting, 'Time Long Past' [8], features a melancholy melody first stated by the clarinets and then presented in various key-centres as the soprano introduces new verses. 'Love's Philosophy' [9] was a challenge to re-score for clarinet quartet. In the original version, I employed a 'ring-off' piano technique originated by George Crumb. By manipulating the pedals on the piano, one releases the dampers on the low end of the piano while playing a loud *staccato* on the upper keys. The low strings of the piano then vibrate with the overtones of the upper keys. It was most difficult to replicate on clarinets, but my attempt can be heard in the opening bars. After the initial vocal statement, the clarinets set-up a nine-quaver ostinato which is superimposed over a  $\frac{4}{4}$  melody in the soprano. The last verse ends with the soprano asking a question over clarinet parallel harmonies, and then the return of the opening 'ring-off' sounds. 'Satan Broken Loose' [10] is an aggressive poem which manifests itself in a very angular and difficult soprano melody and dense, rhythmic harmonies in the quartet accompaniment. I use a type of text-painting every time the poetry refers to God by quoting a distorted version of the Old 100th Psalm. 'An Ariette for Music' [11] is a lovely, short poem which I set as a relaxed waltz. The closing movement of the cycle, 'Good-Night' [12], is one of Shelley's most intimate poems, which I characterise by an intervallic leap of a minor seventh in the melody.

I have known Lauren Shuyler, the soprano in this recording, for over two decades, since she was in her first semester of college. She sang with my wind ensemble at Indiana University of Pennsylvania on numerous occasions and recently recorded an album of all of my songs.<sup>1</sup> Many of my vocal works, including this song-cycle, are dedicated to her.

### **8] Time Long Past**

Like the ghost of a dear friend dead  
Is Time long past.  
A tone which is now forever fled.  
A hope which is now forever past.  
A love so sweet it could not last,  
Was Time long past.

There were sweet dreams in the night  
Of Time long past:  
And, was it sadness or delight,  
Each day a shadow onward cast  
Which made us wish it yet might last –  
That Time long past.

There is regret, almost remorse,  
For Time long past.  
’Tis like a child’s beloved corse  
A father watches, till at last  
Beauty is like remembrance, cast  
From Time long past.

### **9] Love’s Philosophy**

The mountains mingle with the river,  
And the rivers with the ocean.  
The winds of heaven mix forever,

With a sweet emotion.  
Nothing in this world is single,  
All things by a law divine  
In one spirit meet and mingle,  
Why not I with thine? –<sup>2</sup>  
And the sunlight clasps the earth,  
And the moonbeams kiss the sea:  
What is all this sweet work worth  
If thou kiss not me?

### **10] Satan Broken Loose**

A golden-winged Angel stood  
Before the Eternal Judgement-seat:  
His looks were wild, and Devils’ blood  
Stained his dainty hands and feet.  
The Father and the Son  
Knew that strife was now begun.  
They knew that Satan had broken his chain,  
And with millions of daemons in his train,  
Was ranging over the world again.  
Before the Angel had told his tale,  
A sweet and creeping sound  
Like rushing of wings was heard around;  
And suddenly the lamps grew pale –  
The lamps, before the Archangels seven,  
That burn continually in Heaven.

<sup>1</sup> Privately released.

<sup>2</sup> Four lines from Shelley’s original text omitted at this point.

### **[11] An Ariette for Music**

As the moon's soft splendour  
O'er the faint cold starlight of Heaven  
Is thrown.

So your voice most tender  
To the strings without soul had then given  
Its own.

The stars will awaken.  
Though the moon sleep a full hour later,  
To-night;  
No leaf will be shaken  
Whilst the dew of your melody scatters  
Delight!

Though the sound overpowers,  
Sing again, with your dear voice revealing  
A tone

Of some world far from ours,  
Where music and moonlight and feeling  
Are one!

### **[12] Good-Night**

Good-night? ah! no; the hour is ill  
Which severs those it should unite;  
Let us remain together still,  
Then it will be GOOD night.

How can I call the lone night good,  
Though thy sweet wishes wing its flight?  
Be it not said, thought, understood –  
Then it will be – GOOD night.

To hearts which near each other move  
From evening close to morning light,  
The night is good; because, my love,  
They never SAY good-night.

While working on developing a personal repertoire for clarinet quartet, I came across the manuscript of a chorale I had written when I was in doctoral graduate school some forty years ago. I had used parts of it in a wind-band composition from 1990 entitled *Remembrance of Things to Come*. I decided to revisit this short chorale and expand it as *Prelude 1983* [13], using the compositional skills I have acquired since its original creation over four decades earlier.

At the outset, I decided to compose a traditionally scored chamber-ensemble piece, clarinet quartet with piano, although it was the final work created in this collection, *Concert Piece for Clarinet Quartet and Piano*. The first movement, 'Conversation and Dance' [14], begins with a syncopated melody presented by the piano and then stated in canon by the clarinets. These interactions are interrupted by a samba-like bass ostinato in the piano in  $\frac{7}{8}$  metre. The clarinets superimpose a sultry harmony over the ostinato.

The piano returns to the opening material, participating in a canon with its clarinet counterparts. The opening melody is then harmonised, first by the clarinets and then the piano. A variation of the opening melody is presented as a fugato-waltz by the clarinets. The piano responds by setting the basis for a 'lopsided waltz' ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ,  $\frac{2}{4}$ ), following with a new samba-like ostinato as the clarinets provide a more developed version of the sultry harmonic material presented earlier. The clarinets join the ostinato to set-up a full fugue with the subject material based upon the opening melody.

Since my earliest days of compositional study in the mid-1970s, I have been fascinated by modes; indeed, one of my composition teachers, Fisher Tull, dubbed me a 'Lydian freak!' This 'affliction' is evident in the second movement, 'Lament', with a subtitle 'Homage to Aaron Copland' [15]. My favourite work in all the clarinet repertoire is Copland's *Concerto for Clarinet, Strings and Harp*; I have at least a half-dozen recordings of this masterpiece. In 'Lament', I try to emulate the textures of the Copland, but rather than being diatonic, it is modal – Lydian. Twice in the movement, I quote material from the fast cadenza of the Copland, but in a lyrical style. 'Cadenza Tutti' [16] explores a harmonic technique prevalent in all of my music: polychords (two triads at different pitch-centres played simultaneously). There are four statements of the polychordal introduction; two in the piano and the others scored between the clarinets and piano. Though the chordal relationships are the same, each statement is pitched at a different key-centre. These four statements are separated by a quirky rhythmic motif explored by all the players.

The final movement, 'Determination' [17], again uses the Lydian mode in an opening march-like melody first stated in the bass horn and bass clarinet. After yielding several iterations of the melody, the piano introduces a second, gentler theme. However, the clarinets turn this theme, too, into a march, with the piano obliging with a walking bass. As is true to my other large works, form takes over with a reference to the first-movement theme as the two themes of the fourth movement interact with each other.

Since it was at a recording session at UNT that I first met the Barcelona Clarinet Players, my ties with them and Eugene Corporon are important. After I heard that the North Texas Wind Symphony had agreed to perform at the Texas Music Educators'

Conference in February 2023, I was contacted by Professor Corporon asking for a short work for the BCP and the Wind Symphony because he was planning to feature them with his ensemble at the conference. The result was *Rondo alla BCP* [18]. The title, obviously, is taken from Mozart's 'Rondo alla turca'; in form it is a sonata rondo with variations, laid out as a *concerto grosso*, with the BCP as the *concertino* and the wind symphony serving as *ripieno*.

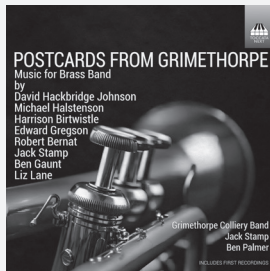


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The **Barcelona Clarinet Players** are a quartet of versatile clarinetists – **Javier Vilaplana González**, E flat and B flat clarinets, **Manuel Martínez Minguez**, B flat clarinet, **Martí Guasteví Olives**, basset horn, and **Alejandro Castillo Vega**, bass clarinet – whose activities are best characterised as a blend of innovation, fusion, interdisciplinarity and pedagogy. Their performances are distinguished by meticulous chamber work and careful and energetic staging.

In their ten and more years of experience, they have commissioned and premiered important works by composers such as Daniel Freiberg, Raquel García-Tomás, Rubén Darío Gómez, José Manuel López López, Arturo Márquez, Núria Núñez Hierro, Enric Palomar, Paquito D’Rivera, Joan Magrané Figuera, Óscar Navarro, Jack Stamp, Victoriano Valencia and Bernat Vivancos. In addition, they have shared the stage with such renowned musicians as the clarinetist and saxophonist Paquito D’Rivera, the pianist Marco Mezquida and the singer Pere Martínez. They have made numerous tours of the USA, Latin America and Europe, presenting their projects and teaching master-classes at prestigious universities. They have appeared as soloists with such formations as the Lone Star Wind Orchestra, North Texas Wind Symphony, Banda Municipal de Barcelona, Banda Municipal de Palma de Mallorca, Banda Municipal de Bilbao and the Symphony Concert Band of the UNAM, under the direction of Eugene Corporon, Tim Reynish, Luís Manuel Sánchez and José Rafael Pascual-Vilaplana, among others.

To date, they have released eight albums presenting different styles: jazz, klezmer, flamenco, symphonic and avant-garde.

The BCP represent the prestigious instrument and accessories brands Selmer and Vandoren, and they wear clothes by the Catalan designer Josep Abril.

**Lauren Shuyler** holds a B.F.A. in Vocal Performance from Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She has performed as a soloist with the Pittsburgh Symphony, Johnstown Symphony, Altoona Symphony, Keystone Wind Ensemble and Lancaster Chamber Singers. She also served as the vocalist for the Keystone Wind Ensemble at the World Association for Symphonic Bands and Ensembles Conference when it was held in Cincinnati in 2009. She has directed award-winning musicals and ensembles at the Lebanon Catholic School, where she was the Music and Theatre Coordinator for seven years. She taught voice at the State Street Academy of Music in Harrisburg for three years and has taught voice and piano privately for the last ten years. She is currently the vocalist for the Lebanon Big Swing Band and the Director of Music for the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic Church in her home state of Pennsylvania, where she is also a Middle School Religion teacher at the Holy Name of Jesus School in Harrisburg.



**Albert Guinovart** is one of the most accomplished and multifaceted musicians of his generation. His professional activity is divided between life as pianist, composer and teacher. After finishing his musical studies in Barcelona, he went to London to study with the eminent piano-teacher Maria Curcio. His performances have taken him throughout Europe, South America, the United States, Canada, Japan, the Middle East, Australia and New Zealand, both in solo recitals and with various orchestras. He has worked with such renowned artists as the soprano Victoria de los Angeles and the dancer and choreographer Nacho Duato. He teaches orchestration and composition at the Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya. His discography boasts more than 30 recordings, among them albums on the Harmonia Mundi label, with sonatas by Albéniz, dances by Turina and Granados' *Goyescas*; symphonic tangos with the Barcelona Symphonic Orchestra released on Decca, and Rodrigo's complete piano works on EMI. His releases with Sony have also met with much success.



**Eugene Migliaro Corporon** is the conductor of the North Texas Wind Symphony and Regents Professor of Music at the University of North Texas. As director of wind studies, he guides all aspects of the programme, including the Master's and Doctoral degrees in wind-conducting. He is a graduate of California State University, Long Beach, and Claremont Graduate University. His performances have drawn praise from



colleagues, composers, connoisseurs and critics alike. His career, which spans six decades, began in 1969. Inducted into the Bands of America Hall of Fame in 2014, he is a recipient of the International Grainger Society Distinctive Contribution Medallion, Kappa Kappa Psi Distinguished Service to Music Award and the Phi Beta Mu International Band Conductor of the Year Award, as well as an Honorary Life Membership granted by the Texas Bandmasters Association. He has also received the Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia National Citation for advancing the cause of music in America, the University of North Texas Student Government Association Honor Professor Award for Teaching Excellence, Student Rapport and Scholarly Publications, the American School Band Directors Association A. A. Harding Award for making significant and lasting contributions to the school-band movement and the California State University, Long Beach, College of Fine Arts and Department of Music Distinguished Alumni Awards. He was awarded the Midwest Clinic Medal of Honor in 2015 in recognition of his unique service to music education and continuing influence on the development and improvement of bands and orchestras worldwide. He received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the College Band Directors National Association in 2019.

Internationally acknowledged as one of the leading ensembles of its kind, the members of the **North Texas Wind Symphony** are selected from the most outstanding musicians attending the College of Music. The ensemble has been acclaimed for 'wonderful and artistically rendered performances which are elegant and polished', and complimented for 'terrific ensemble skills which embody a high degree of integrity and sensitivity', as well as for 'stunning and inspirational recordings', and for 'enriching performances [which] demonstrate their sheer joy of musicing'. With a reputation for adventurous programming, the North Texas Wind Symphony pursues a relentless commitment to American music. It pursues the highest professional standards and is determined to bring its audiences the finest artistic repertoire from all musical periods, cultures and styles.



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