IN-AUDITO: An overview on Finnish bass clarinet music through a performer's analysis of five personal commissions

ANGEL MOLINOS

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ABSTRACT

Even though the first bass clarinet prototypes go back to the second half of the eighteenth century, the history of the bass clarinet as a solo instrument is still relatively short. During its process of emancipation from merely orchestral use, the bass clarinet has proved to be a versatile voice that responds well to challenges presented by composers. Due to its youthfulness, contemporary music is where the instrument has found a place to develop its full potential and versatility: an ever-growing repertoire which is not always easy to keep track of.

From all that repertoire, this thesis analyses music coming from Finland and complements a doctoral series of five large-scale recitals (2012–2021) in which I have explored the artistic possibilities of the bass clarinet as seen over the last four decades. Each concert in the series reflected a specific topic, approached from many different angles in order to provide as broad a picture as possible of the modern bass clarinet.

By examining how the bass clarinet has been used by Finnish composers outside of an orchestral context, the thesis strives to make this repertoire better known and more accessible to potentially interested bass clarinettists beyond Finland's borders. It is divided into two sections, the first of which provides the reader with the needed framework to contextualise the actual study on Finnish bass clarinet music, featured in the second part of the thesis. This analysis of music by Finnish composers in the second section is based on my own experience as a performer and covers a total of 94 pieces by 47 composers, among which are five pieces I commissioned and premiered during my doctoral concert series. The five new works serve as the basis upon which the whole project is built.

This thesis presents an important body of bass clarinet music coming from Finland, encompassing 81 years of bass clarinet writing and including an interesting variety of approaches towards the instrument—from the very first work documented (*Mesikämmen* for bass clarinet and piano, by Matti Rajula, from 1940) to the most recent piece (*Rimbalzi* for bass clarinet and percussion, by Lotta Wennäkoski, from 2021).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude towards those who have been part of this doctoral project.

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The artistic committee, in which I have been fortunate to have a panel of experts with a great variety of artistic profiles, has also played a crucial role in this project. My gratitude goes out to all of them, with Harri Mäki as the Chair, for their encouragement, insightful feedback and inspiring conversations.

Enormous thanks as well to all the fellow musicians and artists who have participated in my doctoral concert series: four sound engineers, three lighting technicians, a harpsichordist, a guitarist, an accordionist, a soprano, a cellist, five percussionists, five bass clarinettists, two conductors, a choir, and a dancer. Their collaboration has not only been an intense artistic experience for me, but a constant source of inspiration from the first moment I started working with each of them.

It might sound too obvious to thank the audience as well, but going through more than two difficult years of restrictions for the performing arts and for culture due to the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us all how exceptionally relevant it is to have a live audience to turn a concert into a reality with their listening presence.

My very special thanks must, of course, go to the composers—not only those who took up my commissions, but all the others featured either in the concert series or in this written work, who immediately showed their enthusiasm for this project and responded to my every request. Without their genuine interest in composing for the bass clarinet, none of this would have been possible.

Finally, I would like to offer my sincere gratitude for the generous support of the institutions that have believed in my work throughout all of these years: Alfred Kordelin Foundation, Arts Promotion Centre Finland (Taike), Finnish Cultural Foundation, Finnish Music Foundation, Sibelius Academy Foundation, and University of the Arts Helsinki.

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1 THE DOCTORAL PROJECT

The primary goal of my doctoral project—composed of a concert series and a thesis—was to delve deeper into the nature of the bass clarinet, which is no longer considered just as an auxiliary instrument within the clarinet family. On the contrary, the bass clarinet is viewed by contemporary composers as an instrument in its own right. It is, however, still not always very well known to audiences—especially in its role as a solo instrument, and that is where I have placed emphasis.[1]

1.1 The concert series

The thesis that follows this introductory chapter is the complement of a concert series comprising five large-scale recitals in which I explored the artistic possibilities of the instrument as seen over the last four decades. Each concert in the series reflected a specific thematic area, approached from many different angles and perspectives. While the thesis focuses exclusively on Finnish bass clarinet music, in my concert series, besides addressing the Finnish repertoire, I also wanted to give Finnish audiences the possibility to experience new international pieces and composers that are more rarely heard in Finland. This combination of music from Finland and abroad enabled me to provide a broader context to the Finnish pieces presented in the concerts, and subsequently discussed in more detail in this thesis.

As seen in the following concert programmes, each concert of my doctoral series focused only on one particular topic within the bass clarinet repertoire but did not exclude strong stylistic contrasts, thus providing as broad a picture as possible of the modern bass clarinet.

• Concert 1 (Camerata Hall, Helsinki Music Centre, 13 December 2012). My first concert featured a full programme of music for bass clarinet and electronics and explored the range of possibilities offered by compositions which employ electronic media: fixed media, live electronics, audiovisuals, sound spatialisation, microphone techniques, etc.

[1] When I use the expressions ‘solo instrument’ or ‘solo repertoire’ in reference to the bass clarinet, I do so in opposition to its role as an orchestral instrument.

BASS CLARINET & ELECTRONICS

Michael Lowenstern (USA, b. 1968)

Ten Children #10, for multitracked bass clarinet (2003)—Finnish Premiere

Josue Moreno (Spain/Finland, b. 1980)

IN-AUDITO, for bass clarinet and live electronics (2012)—World Premiere

Luigi Ceccarelli (Italy, b. 1953)

Birds, for bass clarinet, pre-recorded bass clarinet samples and birdsong (1995/2008)—Finnish Premiere

– Intermission –

Jovanka Trbojević (former Yugoslavia/Finland, 1963–2017)

Le Fantôme Du Vent, for bass clarinet, tape and live electronics (1999)

Martin Schlumpf (Switzerland, b. 1947)

Puzzle, for (SABRe) bass clarinet and computer (2011)—Finnish Premiere

Jacob Ter Veldhuis (Netherlands, b. 1951)

Grab it!, for bass clarinet, boombox and video (1999/2004)—Finnish Premiere

• Concert 2 (Camerata Hall, Helsinki Music Centre, 15 April 2014). This concert demonstrated the versatility of the bass clarinet with an entire programme of duos, all of them rather unusual, but always with the intention of bringing out colourful and interesting sound results. On this occasion, the bass clarinet was presented in partnership with the harpsichord, guitar, accordion, female voice and cello.

SO FULL OF SHAPES… A DUOS CONCERT

Theo Loevendie (Netherlands, b. 1930)

Duo, for solo bass clarinet (1988)

Joe Cutler (England, b. 1968)

Urban Myths, for bass clarinet and harpsichord (1999)—Finnish Premiere

Chasin' the Skunk • Secret Garden • Hokus Pokus

Matthew Whittall (Canada/Finland, b. 1975)

A fragile peace, for bass clarinet, two scordatura guitars (one player) and live electronics/fixed media (2013)—World Premiere

– Intermission –

Toshio Hosokawa (Japan, b. 1955)

In die Tiefe der Zeit, for clarinet/bass clarinet and accordion (2001)—Finnish Premiere

Pascal Dusapin (France, b. 1955)

So Full of Shapes is Fancy, for bass clarinet and soprano (1990)—Finnish Premiere

Kimmo Hakola (Finland, b. 1958)

Capriole, for bass clarinet and cello (1991)

• Concert 3 (Sonore Hall, Helsinki Music Centre, 12 March 2016). The third concert continued portraying the bass clarinet as a chamber music instrument in different ensembles but focused exclusively on music for bass clarinet and percussion. Initially a 'spin-off' from the previous concert, given the richness and potential offered by this combination, I finally decided to raise its significance within my project by dedicating a full concert to it.

BASS CLARINET AND PERCUSSION

Antti Auvinen (Finland, b. 1974)

Karkija, for bass clarinet and marimba (2007)

Ivan Fedele (Italy, b. 1953)

Modus, for bass clarinet and percussion (1988/1995)

Mikko Hassinen (Finland, b. 1971)

Raqs, for bass clarinet and tombak (2016)—World Premiere

– Intermission –

Franco Donatoni (Italy, 1927–2000)

Cinis II, for bass clarinet, marimba and percussion (1995)—Finnish Premiere

Morton Feldman (USA, 1926–1987)

Bass Clarinet and Percussion (1981)

• Concert 4 (Camerata Hall, Helsinki Music Centre, 17 February 2018). Multiplying the extraordinary sonic capabilities of the bass clarinet in two or more parts can create very powerful and attractive combinations. In this concert, I explored the possibilities of grouping bass clarinets in various ways, with a programme that ranged from solo to bass clarinet sextet.

BASS CLARINET [TO THE POWER OF…]

Isang Yun (Korea, 1917–1995)

Monolog, for solo bass clarinet (1983)

Timo Hietala (Finland, b. 1960)

Last Two Lamantines, for two bass clarinets (1998)

– Intermission –

Cornelius Boots (USA, b. 1974)

Va Larga, for four bass clarinets (2004)—Finnish Premiere

Henri Bok (Netherlands, b. 1950)

Bh-Dee, for bass clarinet solo and bass clarinet quartet (2017)—World Premiere

Lotta Wennäkoski (Finland, b. 1970)

Rumbo, for six bass clarinets (2018)—World Premiere

• Concert 5 (I. Helsinki Design Museum, 15 September 2018 / II. Sonore Hall, Helsinki Music Centre, 21 December 2021). To search for innovative ways of presenting music on stage is an idea that had always been present throughout my project, although it was the fifth concert in which I dealt with it in the greatest detail. Divided into two parts, this final instalment of my doctoral series focused on music involving other artistic disciplines, such as architecture, design, dance and performance art, and examined, among other relevant aspects of present-day musical language, the concept of theatricality in music.

I. THE PROCESS OF BECOMING

Josué Moreno (Spain/Finland, b. 1980)
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Ville Raasakka (Finland, b. 1977)
Everyday Etudes No.1: Garden, for sound file, bass clarinettist and object player with gardening tools (2015)

Veli-Matti Puumala (Finland, b. 1965)
Kaarre II, for clarinettist, dancer and live electronics (1993)

Roderik de Man (Indonesia/Netherlands, b. 1941)
Nose, for bass clarinet and wine glass (2005)—Finnish Premiere

As a performer of new music, I have always felt the need—and also the duty—to proceed in a direction that would allow me to keep exploring new paths and opening new doors both for the audience and myself. This is especially relevant when talking about an instrument that does not carry the baggage of an extensive history. For that reason, besides including a good number of

pieces and composers that had never been performed in Finland, each concert featured the premiere of a piece that I commissioned from a Finnish composer.[2] Therefore, the structure of each concert was always quite similar: a world premiere by a Finnish composer and at least one more Finnish piece that I considered representative of the topic I was dealing with in that particular concert, while the rest of the programme consisted of international works, ranging from 'classics' in the repertoire to more unknown pieces.

1.2 The thesis

I was already mindful of the vastness of the bass clarinet repertoire, but designing these five concert programmes made it even more evident. It was that difficulty in being aware of the entire repertoire that became the driving force to undertake this written work. Although the logical reaction to this could have been trying to make a global compilation of bass clarinet music, the content of this thesis is slightly less ambitious in terms of the 'territory' that it aims to cover, but hopefully more useful and practical than just a large list of works and composers.

As mentioned, and as a counterpoint to the more globally-oriented repertoire I performed during my concert series, this thesis focuses only on music from Finland. It examines how the bass clarinet has been treated as a solo instrument by Finnish composers, from the earliest pieces written for it to the most recent works, some of which I have commissioned and premiered myself.

Five of those commissions—the ones I premiered in my doctoral concerts—constitute the central part of the thesis since they form the second of the two sections in which it is divided. The analysis of these new works, approached always from a performer's point of view, allow me to bring to discussion several topics directly connected with them, as well as to go through other related pieces from the Finnish repertoire, thus providing an overall view of the bass clarinet music that has been composed in Finland. When writing about each piece of the Finnish bass clarinet repertoire, I preferred not to have the same specific plan for all of them, and to let my ideas and thoughts as a performer flow freely instead. Obviously, my personal preferences

[2] Besides those who have been born in Finland, by Finnish composers I also mean those who have a permanent residence in the country or an especially remarkable relation with it. The sources I have used are the lists of composers from the Society of Finnish Composers (*Suomen Säveltäjät ry*) and MusicFinland—the organisation that, with the main goal of promoting Finnish music both in Finland and abroad, took over the activities of the former Finnish Music Information Centre (FIMIC) in 2012.

played a role, and this is something I never wanted to hide. In some pieces I have let the composer speak with a direct quotation, or even the performer who premiered the piece, while in others it was the sound or atmosphere created by the music that captured my attention, the way the composer used the instrument, the form, or any other aspect I considered particularly relevant, such as biographical information about the composer or just some personal suggestions for those interested in performing the music. However, I have always tried to give what I thought could be of interest to a reader wanting to know more about a certain piece of music.

On the other hand, the first section of the thesis helps contextaualise all that information presented in the second section while leading the reader towards it:

In the *Introduction,* besides supplying a brief historical context and reviewing some of the existing sources about the bass clarinet repertoire and how Finnish music is represented there, I express my motivations to carry on this work and the main goals I wanted to achieve.

The next chapter, *Towards a solo instrument,* aims at shedding light on the process that led the bass clarinet to the significant position that it currently holds within the contemporary music scene. It presents probably the most prominent bass clarinet performers in the field of classical music—two pioneers, with their similarities and differences: Joseph Horák (1931–2005), credited as having performed the first-ever bass clarinet full recital in 1955; and Harry Sparnaay (1944–2017), who became an ambassador of the instrument worldwide, enticing hundreds of composers to write for it.

Under the general title of *Notation,* the last chapter of the first section of the thesis deals with this term and its different meanings, since notation is a concept that is often closely associated with contemporary musical language. Besides discussing the different systems of notation for bass clarinet, this chapter also includes some personal reflections about the relation between the performer, the notation of a musical work, the work itself, the composer's intentions, and other interrelated factors in the act of interpreting and performing a given notated score.

The three final appendices enumerate all the bass clarinet works by Finnish composers that will have been previously mentioned—solo pieces and duos, with and without electronics, plus some pieces for larger ensembles—also including a list of bass clarinet concertante music.

PART I

THE BASS CLARINET: SOME GENERAL REMARKS

2 INTRODUCTION

According to clarinet scholar Albert Rice (2009, 249–250), the first bass clarinet prototypes—"limited in compass and intonation, that were played occasionally, if at all"—date from around 1750, but "the first playable bass clarinets were created in Dresden by Heinrich and August Grenser during the early 1790s".[3] While other makers contributed to the technical development of the instrument with different innovations, it was not until the 1830s that Adolphe Sax (1814–1894) implemented a radically new design that greatly improved the instrument, setting the grounds for the bass clarinet that we know today.[4]

It is believed that in its early years of existence the bass clarinet remained confined to supporting the low woodwind parts of wind bands (Rice 2009, 249).[5] However, no music using the bass clarinet has survived from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The earliest example of surviving music is a prominent solo in the second act of the opera *Emma d'Antiochia* from 1834, by Italian composer Saverio Mercadante (1795–1870), with a level of difficulty and exposure that is rarely seen in the later orchestral repertoire. The opera *Les Huguenots*, by German composer Giacomo Meyerbeer (1791–1864), with a solo in the fifth act that in many publications is mistakenly referred to as the first example of bass clarinet music, was composed in 1836, two years after Mercadante's work.

Since then, composers have started to see the bass clarinet as a distinctive voice that can be placed under the spotlight with soloistic passages in their symphonic and operatic works: Franz Liszt (1811–1886), Richard Wagner (1813–1883), Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901) Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893), Gustav Mahler (1860–1911), Richard Strauss (1864–1949) and Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–1975), to name just a few.

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[3] Several sources refer to the Parisian newspaper *L'Avant-Coureur*, which in 1772 mentioned a new musical instrument by French maker Gilles Lot called *basse tube* or *basse de clarinette*, as the first document pointing towards the existence of the bass clarinet. Nevertheless, there is no extant example of this reference, and the general opinion nowadays maintains that this announcement might have referred to a basset horn rather than to a bass clarinet.

[4] Belgian patent no. 1051 approved on 1 July 1838 (Rice 2009, 291).

[5] It was also Rice (2011, 54) who later brought to light a concert from 1794 by the clarinettist of the Stockholm Court Orchestra Johann I. Stranensky, which included three works with bass clarinet in different chamber music settings, and which "all other textbooks and studies concerning the bass clarinet fail to mention". While the pieces have not been found, according to Rice, "it is the earliest documented bass clarinet music".

Over time, the bass clarinet also found a place as a solo instrument outside the orchestra. According to Aber (1990, 103–105), besides some scarce earlier works of uncertain origin, the first published piece of this kind—in 1890—is the *Premier Offertoire* for bass clarinet with piano or organ accompaniment by French composer Jules Pillevestre (1837–1903). As the twentieth century drew on, more composers decided to write bass clarinet music of considerably higher calibre than Pillevestre's seventy-nine-bar work. Nevertheless, it was not until the 1970s when composers started to show a predilection for the bass clarinet as a solo instrument, taking full advantage of its possibilities: the largest compass of all the woodwind family of instruments, a wide dynamic range, an exceptionally variable timbre, and a great adaptability for the most diverse musical situations.[6]

Half a century later, we have seen a quick but intense transformation from a simply orchestral role to a popular solo instrument among contemporary composers. Therefore, there is a certain lack of a core repertoire if we compare the bass clarinet with many other instruments with a longer history. There are some pieces that have already become cornerstones of the bass clarinet repertoire, but besides those it is not so easy to identify a clearly established core of works.[7]

The repertoire of the most recent period comes from many different countries around the globe, and in some cases it is relatively unknown outside the composer's sphere of influence. It is often the case that each country has a specific repertoire by its own composers, but those pieces cannot always be easily accessed, as I experienced when designing my doctoral concert series.

Despite all the evolution in considering and perceiving the artistic value of the bass clarinet, the existing literature dedicated exclusively to this instrument is still relatively limited. Among the reference works we can find two books by two of the most influential bass clarinet performers and pedagogues in recent times: Henri Bok (b. 1950) with his *New techniques for the bass clarinet* (Bok & Wendel 1989), and Harry Sparnaay (1944–2017) with *The bass clarinet: A*

[6] The bass clarinet spans around four and a half octaves, its lowest note being the same as the bassoon's and without a clearly defined limit at the top end. Under certain musical conditions and depending on extra-musical factors, such as the strength of the reed, it can be extended up to five octaves—nearly as high as the soprano clarinet in B-flat, which hereafter will be referred to as clarinet, since it is the most common instrument in the family.

[7] Some of the most obvious ones include the *Suite* for solo bass clarinet op. 37a (1926) by Adolf Busch (1891–1952), the *Sonata* for bass clarinet and piano op. 41 (1928) by Othmar Schoeck (1986–1957) and *Ballade* for bass clarinet and piano (1939) by Eugène Bozza (1905–1991), from the earlier repertoire, and the solo works *Sequenza IXc* (1980) by Luciano Berio (1925–2003), *Monolog* (1983) by Isang Yun (1917–1995) and *Soft* (1989) by Franco Donatoni (1927–2000), from the post-1970s repertoire.

personal history (Sparnaay 2011). Both focus extensively on extended or contemporary techniques—those that have evolved within the contemporary music practice and differ from the formerly standardised way of playing in the classical and romantic periods—including fingering charts and numerous examples and excerpts from the repertoire.[8] At the same time, however, the way the books were conceived is very different: while Bok barely accompanies the examples with any text, Sparnaay even 'warns' the reader with the subtitle of the book—*A personal history*—so one should be ready to find a great number of very personal expressions, opinions and anecdotes that make the reading entertaining, but that pull no punches.

Although both books provide us with a valuable list of bass clarinet music and composers, they are very personal selections and many other works are inevitably missed. Only two of the Finnish pieces that are mentioned in this thesis can be found in Bok's and Sparnaay's lists: *Sirba* for three clarinets, bass clarinet and tape (1982) by Austrian-born composer Herman Rechberger (Bok & Wendel 1989, 90, 91), and *Piping Down the Valleys Wild* for bass clarinet and piano op. 26 (1984) by Jouni Kaipainen (Sparnaay 2011, 194).[9]

More recently, British clarinettist Sarah Watts has also contributed to the bass clarinet literature with an extensive study on bass clarinet multiphonics (Watts 2016). In her research into the multiphonic possibilities of the instrument, Watts also goes through several pieces and composers. From all of them, we can find only one reference to a piece from the Finnish repertoire—*Oi Kuu* for bass clarinet and cello (1990), by Kaija Saariaho—while, for example, there are many examples from UK-based composers.

It is important to point out that since all these bass-clarinet-specific books, as well as a good number of doctoral dissertations, articles and online materials, stress the subject of extended techniques, this thesis is not intended to be just another manual of contemporary techniques. Some of these techniques will obviously be mentioned, but always in service of the specific piece in which they feature.

[8] Multiphonics, microtones, playing with air, *frullato*, slap tongue, *bisbigliando*, *glissando*, teeth on the reed, key sounds and using the voice while playing are some of the most popular bass clarinet extended techniques.

[9] In Sparnaay's book there is a misspelling in the name of the composer, which appears as Kaipanen instead of the correct form Kaipainen.

Aside from a focus on extended techniques, there have also been initiatives to cover the whole spectrum of the bass clarinet repertoire, without setting any limits, either temporal, geographical, stylistic, etc. These proposals, which can be found in printed format and as online materials, present very useful results, but unfortunately none of them is completely successful, for the simple reason that it is just a utopian task. Concerning Finnish music, the information is incomplete and at times inaccurate.

In his doctoral dissertation from 1986, Albert Hunt includes a surprisingly high number of bass clarinet works—1207, including arrangements. Among them, only one Finnish piece can be found, and again, there are mistakes: *Szene am...*, by Herman Rechberger, which in Hunt's text misplaces the ellipsis and misspells the name of the composer as "*...Szene am*, by Hermann Rochberger" (Hunt 1986, 108, 189).

Online, the website of the International Bass Clarinet Research Center (C.I.R.C.B.), https://www.circb.info/, is a very ambitious project that aims to cover basically 'everything' related to the bass clarinet, including more than 7500 compositions for bass clarinet in its database.[10] This Italian initiative established in 2010 shows an admirable passion and enthusiasm for the instrument and is a very valuable resource, but many Finnish pieces are missing. This is almost unavoidable owing to the relative newness of the repertoire, to which one does not always have direct access and which includes contributions by third parties. Likely, anyone who attempts to collect a complete list of contemporary compositions at any level will inevitably fail at some point or aspect without the deep knowledge gained through the direct experience and study of the music in question. Furthermore, knowing only the names of the pieces and composers would not help much for those wishing to know more about the pieces.

While trying to focus on the whole repertoire would have been just as fraught as the aforementioned works, the more modest goal of concentrating on Finnish music gave me the possibility to access and study all the works that are mentioned and discussed in this thesis. When possible, most of the works by living composers have been confirmed through personal contact with them.

[10] C.I.R.C.B. stands for the Italian name of the organisation: *Centro Internazionale di Ricerca sul Clarinetto Basso*.

The journal that the International Clarinet Association (ICA) publishes quarterly, *The Clarinet*, is another useful resource since it features a good number of articles dedicated to the bass clarinet, and even more specifically to the bass clarinet repertoire, as well as numerous record and music reviews where an abundant amount of new works can be found. Unfortunately, not much Finnish bass clarinet music is mentioned in the 193 issues published since the journal started in 1973, even though some of the articles are labelled as 'comprehensive'.[11]

Until 2004, the closest we can get to a Finnish bass clarinet piece in more than 30 years of this publication is Igor Stravinsky's arrangement for clarinet, bass clarinet, four horns, harp and double bass for Jean Sibelius' *Canzonetta* for string orchestra op. 62a (Smith 1974, 15), as well as an article about Finnish clarinet music, in which its author mentions Erik Bergman's *Concertino da Camera* for flute, clarinet, bass clarinet, percussion, piano, violin, viola and cello from 1961 (Anderson 1975, 8). Both pieces are listed again a few years later in another article aiming to cover the bass clarinet repertoire (Thompson 1989, 53).

Well into the twenty-first century, we finally start finding more references to Finnish bass clarinet music, mainly through CD reviews. Mandat (2004, 86–87) mentions Jouni Kaipainen's *Piping Down The Valleys Wild* (bass clarinet and piano), Jovanka Trbojević's *Le Fantôme Du Vent* (bass clarinet and live electronics), Kirmo Lintinen's *Oikku* (bass clarinet and piano), Paavo Heininen's *Gymel* (bass clarinet and tape) and Timo Hietala's *Last Two Lamantines* (two bass clarinets), from a recording by Heikki Nikula (Jasemusiikki: JaseCD 0039); Nichols (2011, 14) makes reference to Antti Auvinen's *Karkija* (bass clarinet and percussion), from a recording by Ingólfur Vilhjálmsson (Iceland Music Information Centre: ITM 907); and Stanley (2015, 92–93) reviews Hannu Pohjannoro's *saari, rannaton* (bass clarinet and tape), Adina Dumitrescu's *Necklace* (solo bass clarinet) and Riikka Talvitie's *Broken Lullaby* (clarinet and bass clarinet), from a recording by Mikko Raasakka (Alba: ABCD 368). Besides these recording reviews, we can also find a mention of Kimmo Hakola's *Capriole* (bass clarinet and cello) when referring to other clarinet music by the composer (Barrett 2010, 90), a more extensive review of the already-mentioned *Broken Lullaby* (clarinet and bass clarinet) by Riikka Talvitie (Barrett 2014, 99) and the announcement of the premiere of Kalevi Aho's *Concerto* for bass clarinet and orchestra (Schultz 2019, 55).

[11] Last issue consulted: *The Clarinet*, 1/49 (December 2021). As with the bass clarinet music mentioned in this thesis, I have taken the end of 2021 as the limit to be considered in this research. Therefore, it does not include any piece or article written in 2022 or later.

Some of the consulted articles were written quite long ago, which may perhaps explain the shortage of references to Finnish bass clarinet music, because access to new repertoire was very different then from what it is nowadays. However, the scarcity of allusions to Finnish clarinet pieces continues in more recent articles as well, which confirms that even today, when the internet and social media are breaking down boundaries and eliminating physical distances, the music needs time to travel and committed performers who make it travel. This may be related to my previous reflection on the dispersion of the most recent repertoire and the difficulties in accessing works by composers from different geographical areas than one's own. *The Clarinet* journal is published in the U.S., and an important part of its contributors are from that same country. If it were written in Scandinavia, the situation with the number of Finnish works mentioned could probably be substantially different, although who knows if in this case the North-American repertoire would be represented properly, for instance.

In his book *Clarinet*, Jack Brymer (1976, 211) says that "to select and discuss any list of works which can be regarded as complete or exhaustive is an obvious impossibility". Also Harry Sparnaay (2011, 184) elucidates in a very clear and simple way the problem that anything written about contemporary music might become outdated by the time it is published, in this case pointing directly to a huge repertoire which expands every day, as it happens with the bass clarinet:

> "You might have think [*sic*] it would be nice to have the complete repertoire in one book, but please realise that not only hundreds of pages would have to be printed, but such a weighty book would probably be out of date and incomplete at the moment of it's [*sic*] appearance because new works are being written all the time."

I am aware of that potential risk in a work of these characteristics, and although I have had direct contact with the composers and the music I am discussing about for years, it would be too adventurous to say that I am completely certain of not having missed a single piece. Nevertheless, I consider it important to start at some point, and hopefully my work can be continued in the future, not only about the Finnish repertoire, but also with initiatives from other countries. Performers must take challenges and responsibilities in order to broaden horizons, and I am glad to add my small contribution with this project.

3 TOWARDS A SOLO INSTRUMENT

"They are all slow-speaking hollow-toned instruments, rather wanting in power. The clarinet quality is less marked than in the acuter forms of the instrument, insomuch that they more resemble an organ pipe of bourdon tone. […] Although occasionally of value for producing exceptional effects, it does not present any great advantages for orchestral use" (Stone 1879, 149–150).

"[…] elle ne convient guère à l'expression de la joie ni de la gaîté" (Rimsky-Korsakov 1914, 23).[12]

"It cannot be said, however, that even to-day sufficient attention is given to it by composers" (Rendall 1954, 154).

"Unfortunately, there are few chamber music works, let alone solo pieces with orchestra, with dominating bass clarinet" (Kroll 1965/1968, 115).

"N.H. [Norman Heim]: Would you encourage youngsters to study bass clarinet?
H. S. [Harry Sparnaay]: Yes, yes.
N.H.: The reason I ask is because in this country [the U.S.], if a young person plays clarinet, it is the weakest players that are taken off of clarinet and put on alto, bass and contra-bass clarinet, and that defeats the whole purpose because you never have anyone who is musically gifted to play one of the lower instruments. That's a real problem" (Heim 1980, 17).

"The circumstance that helped the high clarinet to achieve its dominant position [compared to the low clarinets] would be called by the naturalist an ecological niche, by the economist a gap in the market" (Birsak 1992/1994, 67).

"A final anecdote from Michael Lowenstern sums up the journey thus far: 'In 1994 I got a letter from Concert Artists' Guild telling me (after I applied to their competition) that bass clarinet repertoire wouldn't sustain an audience. Their suggestion was that I play bassoon transcriptions or the Stravinsky Three Pieces on bass clarinet'" (Russell 2014, 70).

[12] Translated in the English edition as "[…] it is incapable of joyful expression" (Rimsky-Korsakov 1964, 20).

Luckily, a lot has changed since some of the previous comments and misconceptions were pronounced, and the bass clarinet has firmly evolved towards its emancipation as a solo instrument. Nowadays we can happily state that the time when it was regarded as a doubling instrument or a secondary task for the less capable clarinettist in the section, has been left behind. Continuing with Birsak's analogy when he talks about a 'gap in the market' referring to the low clarinets, the situation has turned now into the complete opposite, and that 'gap' has been fully covered by a successful 'product' for which there is an incredibly high demand in the contemporary music 'market': the bass clarinet.

In the condensed history of the bass clarinet as a solo instrument, there are two events that can be considered as of pivotal importance:

- Brno, 24 March 1955: Josef Horák (1931–2005) performed the first known bass clarinet full recital in history.
- Rotterdam, April 1972: Harry Sparnaay (1944–2017) became the first bass clarinettist to win the International Gaudeamus Competition for Interpreters of Contemporary Music.

Josef Horák was a true pioneer, the first who lifted the bass clarinet from the opera pit and the symphonic stage to the solo podium, the first who gave up a position in a symphony orchestra to devote his life to the bass clarinet. Nothing can be more revealing about it than quoting Horák himself in an article he wrote for *The Clarinet* soon after his first visit to the U.S. as a lecturer and recitalist with *Due Boemi di Praga* during the 1976 International Clarinet Clinic in Denver, Colorado:[13]

> "For twelve years I was clarinetist at the State Philharmonic in my own country, Czechoslowakia. As so often in life, pure chance played a decisive role. When one of my colleagues (the bass clarinetist in the orchestra) fell ill, I had to function as a substitute. Since that occasion, the principal conductor of the orchestra never wanted to have another bass clarinetist. Since that first close contact with the instrument it occurred to me after some time that the limited role of the instrument is really not necessary. I immediately fell in love with the bass clarinet and I regretted that this beautiful instrument was used to such a limited extent. […] My first bass clarinet recital was in 1955. It was the first full evening solo recital of the bass clarinet in the world. […] At the beginning of the sixties I founded the ensemble 'Musica nova Brno' in the Czechoslowakian town of Brno. The complement we played was violin or flute, bass clarinet, piano, and percussion

[13] According to Simmons (2009, 13), that visit was also the first bass clarinet recital ever given in the USA.

> instrument. […] The number of concert obligations was on the increase so that in 1963 I relinquished my place at the Philharmonic. Then I established, with the pianist Madame Emma Kovárnová, the Ensemble Due Boemi die [*sic*] Praga. The beginning was by no means easy. The public and the promoters did not know what they could expect from bass clarinet and piano" (Horák 1977, 25–27).

Horák's activity as a soloist and chamber musician with different ensembles, but especially with *Due Boemi di Praga* across a span of 42 years (1963–2005), inspired numerous composers to write for the bass clarinet.[14] It even brought him the designation of the "Paganini of the bass clarinet" (Štědroň 2006, 33), a nickname that became Horák's inseparable partner until the end of his career.

Thirteen years younger than Horák, Harry Sparnaay burst into the international scene when he won the Gaudeamus International Interpreters Award in 1972. His public exposition at the Gaudeamus competition was important not only for him, but also for his instrument, which soon after that started to draw more attention from the international contemporary music community. It was like a 'snowball' getting bigger and bigger, which continued rolling during Sparnaay's whole life, even though he officially played his last concert on 13 April 2014 in 's-Hertogenbosch (Netherlands), in a festival that celebrated his 70th birthday.

Looking back to 1955 and Horák's recital, the current situation has changed quite a bit. Besides the *Sonata* by Othmar Schoeck and the premiere of *Sketches* by his Czech colleague Josef Mašta, the programme of this concert consisted basically of transcriptions, including works by Girolamo Frescobaldi, Benedetto Marcello, Jan Křtitel Vaňhal, Benjamin Godard and Richard Wagner (Simmons 2009, 2–3). Conversely, Horák mentions neither Schoeck's nor Mašta's pieces: "At that time I played only arrangements,[15] of course, by Vanhal, Wagner, Fibich, and others" (Horák 1977, 27). He probably wrote it that way to underline the fact that the existing original repertoire was very limited, although he also mentions Fibich as one of the composers, so it is also possible that he mixed up that programme with another concert.

[14] *Due Boemi di Praga*'s last concert took place on October 2005, during the first World Bass Clarinet Convention of Rotterdam that celebrated the 50th Anniversary of Horák's memorable first recital. He died one month later.

[15] Horák normally used the term arrangement when referring to playing bass clarinet transcriptions of music written for other instruments.

However, it seems Horák was very keen on transcriptions, which he continued playing during his whole career. Even though he soon had more than enough original repertoire to include in his concert programmes, he always enjoyed lending the voice of his bass clarinet to a repertoire that was not originally conceived for it. He actually received permission to play bass clarinet versions of works by several living composers of his time, such as Bohuslav Martinů (1890–1959), Oliver Messiaen (1908–1992), Karlheinz Stockhausen (1928–2007) and Luboš Sluka (b. 1928), among others, but Horák (1977, 27) specifically marks Paul Hindemith (1895–1963) as one of the first well-known composers who helped him. The first meeting between the musicians in Frankfurt in 1960—a celebrated and well-known anecdote among bass clarinettists—resulted in the authorisation to play a bass clarinet version of his bassoon sonata. The story has different variations in the retelling, but without going too much into the details, it sums up as follows:

A stranger came into the hall where Horák was practicing with his bass clarinet and soon began to ask questions about it. After a while, the unknown visitor asked him whether he had considered playing Hindemith's bassoon Sonata on his instrument. Horák's answer was that the composer might not like the idea, after which the stranger introduced himself as Paul Hindemith.

> "When he [Hindemith] visited Prague in 1961 and I [Horák] played the sonata for him, he said that he can [*sic*] imagine it only with difficulty to be played on the bassoon" (Horák 1977, 27).

A similar situation with the lack of original repertoire happened to Harry Sparnaay in his participation in the Gaudeamus competition:

> "With all the pieces we didn't have a choice: Kagel (for any wind instrument), Jos Kunst's *Solo identity I*, an improvising kind of piece by Theo Loevendie, and the Greek composers. From the seven, three were for any wind instrument" (Uren 1995).[16]

Besides the first prize as a soloist, Sparnaay also received the fifth prize for partnering with pianist Polo de Haas as *Fusion Moderne*—a duo founded in 1971 that stayed together until 2006:

[16] If there is no page number after the year of a reference, it means that the original source does not include page numbers.

> "The Duo repertoire had no more than six [pieces]. 'Are those your choice?' we were asked. 'No, that's all we have' was our answer. At that time we did not have any more pieces but they were just about sufficient to participate in the competition" (Sparnaay 2011, 17).

He admitted that, although there was already some original music, he was searching for something else: "I had some repertoire from Josef Horák but I didn't like all the pieces" (Uren 1995). In addition, as it can be read many times in his book, Sparnaay was not very fond of playing transcriptions, which he sometimes criticised with vehemence. Personally, rather than seeing them as 'artistic sacrileges', I prefer to have a more open attitude towards transcriptions. While it is true that the bass clarinet has a large original repertoire, some transcriptions can still have great value, both pedagogically and artistically.

Although under many different circumstances, whether temporal, geographical, political or something else, both Horák and Sparnaay soon realised the need for new pieces if they wanted to remain bass clarinettists:

> "I stood before the task to convince the world of music that the bass clarinet, which was used up to now only for limited scope within the symphonic orchestra, is an instrument with much greater and hitherto unused expressional extent and with undreamt-of possibilities. But at the same time the composers had to be convinced that I needed their help to provide a fitting, musically interesting, and expressionally manifold repertoire for this instrument" (Horák 1977, 27).

> "As freshly graduated bass clarinettist I wrote to many composers with the request to write something for me. These requests were more or less a plea, because I realized that without new compositions, my career would be short-lived. New works were literally a source of life for me" (Sparnaay 2011, 23).

That was not always an easy task and sometimes it took them time to persuade composers because the role of the bass clarinet as a solo instrument was in such an early stage of development that it was still relatively or even completely unknown for many of them:

> "It took quite some time before composers realized what can be done with the bass clarinet. Before writing his first suite for me, the practician, experimenter, and quarter-tone composer, Professor Hába, wrote to me asking whether the bass clarinet can play only slow sixteenth notes à la Bach, or also fast ones as in Mozart" (Horák 1977, 25–26).

> "When I met Isang [Yun] for the first time I asked him to write a piece for me and he was interested but... didn't know the instrument well and asked me: Can you also play staccato over the whole register? So I put my instrument together in the dressing room and I played for him what he wanted to hear. And he said... WOW! A year later I met him in another festival and asked him: Mr. Yun, have you already started the piece? And he said: Listen, can you also play very softly in the high register but also very loud? So I did it for him and his mouth opened wide, and then he said... WOW! This happened twice more when I met him, always with further questions, and then (I never will forget that day) on a Sunday morning at 9:30 he phoned me and said: This is Isang... Your piece is finished. Well, you can imagine how I felt!!!!" (Sparnaay 2013).

There is no doubt that the admirable commitment to the bass clarinet of these two pioneers paved the way for the robust health this instrument is enjoying today. Contrasting with the situation they both had to face at the beginning of their careers when they hardly had enough material to put a recital together, nowadays we are fortunate to have a great number of pieces to choose from. On the other hand, this abundance of music makes it sometimes difficult to be fully aware of the choices, as it has been already stated in the previous chapter of this thesis.

4 NOTATION

Since the term 'notation' can have different meanings, I have divided this chapter in two sections. The first one, being more factual or objective, is exclusive to the bass clarinet and describes the systems of notation that can be employed when writing music for it. The second is based on a personal reflection about the relation between notation and sound in contemporary music, which could be common to any other instrument when associating it to the contemporary music language and its particularities. Nevertheless, and even though notation is a fascinating concept, it is by no means the central approach in the thesis. The brief reflection presented in the second part of this chapter is one way to introduce a personal experience with a particular piece which I consider relevant and illustrative in discussing music from the performer's point of view, as it happens in this thesis.

4.1 Bass clarinet systems of notation

Generally speaking, there are two different conventions that have been adopted to write for the bass clarinet: the so-called German and French systems.

In French notation the music is written in treble clef and it sounds a major ninth below the written notes, assuming bass clarinet in B-flat.[17] On the other hand, German notation combines both treble and bass clefs, and the music sounds in the same octave as it is notated, that is a major second lower. In other words, while in French notation the music is read as on the clarinet, therefore, sounding an octave lower, in German notation the sections in treble clef must be played an octave higher than on the clarinet.

Despite the initial awkwardness of having a number of ledger lines both for the highest and the lowest notes, French notation is still more widely preferred, and Finnish composers are no exception. From all the pieces that have been analysed in this thesis only Magnus Lindberg (b. 1958) uses German notation in *Action-Situation-Signification*, his first piece including the bass

[17] Although the bass clarinet in A was used by major composers such as Wagner, who first introduced it in *Lohengrin* (1848), as well as Mahler, Ravel and others, it is nowadays regarded as obsolete and almost a rare curiosity, with all the music being written for bass clarinet in B-flat. Keith Bowen (2011) examines in more detail the use of this instrument in the past, as well as the reasons for its sometime popularity and gradual decline.

clarinet (1982). However, as we will see later in chapter 6.3, this is such an unconventional work that the system of notation is definitely not an issue.

My opinion is that avoiding the use of the bass clef completely and having everything written in French notation eliminates any possibility of confusion. Nowadays no one doubts in which octave to play the bass clarinet parts of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* (1913), where the Russian composer mixes both notations: the bass clef is used as in German notation, and the treble clef as in the French system. But what if this mixture appears in a less celebrated piece? Or what to expect if a piece starts in treble clef and only changes to bass clef at the end? At first, one could think that it is in French notation, and only later, after some practicing, realise that it is actually employing German notation.

Most bass clarinettists began as clarinet players and combine both instruments in their professional practice, so it is quite safe to say that no one will feel terribly uncomfortable with French notation.

4.2 The relation between notation and sound in contemporary music. A personal reflection

> "Music inhabits the realms of the invisible" (De Assis & Brooks & Coessens 2013, 5).

This is how Paulo de Assis begins his *Prelude* to *Essays on Sound, Score and Notation*, bringing forward the complexity involved when trying to notate a certain musical idea—to translate invisible sound into its visual representation. In the same way, British composer Michael Finnissy (b. 1946) wonders, "How clear can you hear or envisage a sound? Notation is about choice and degrees of exactitude, reality-unreality" (Bayley & Heyde 2017, 81).

Ultimately, musical notation is just a way to approximate the idea that the composer has in mind, and it is not always possible for it to capture every colour or subtle nuance that needs to be expressed. Even though composers are free to create their own symbols and add as thorough performing instructions as desired, their creative mind can go beyond what any actual notation is able to reveal. Sometimes, composers even decide to leave certain aspects open, inviting the performer to a different level of engagement with the musical material, as we will see in some examples presented in the next chapters. After all, the most important thing is that they find the

best way to communicate their ideas and intentions: to inform of their wishes, or better said, of their music's wishes.

Regardless of what can be found in the score in each particular situation, however, I believe performers should always strive to find their own 'voice' to face a certain passage and make it work at its best. This unique and individual voice has to interact with the composer's intentions, while remaining as faithful as possible to them. Direct contact with the composer is an advantage offered by contemporary music when compared with the music of the past. But this performer–composer correspondence is sometimes limited or just not possible, so one must figure out how to understand the music and find a sound to express it.

In this sense, I find very illustrative the distinction that American composer Charles Ives (1874–1954) made between the idea in the composer's mind, which "should never be changed for the sake of facility" (Cowell & Cowell 1955, 178), and the physical materialisation of that idea through sound during the performance in order to make it audible. In *Essays Before a Sonata*, Ives exemplifies this matter with great ingenuity:

> "A MS. [manuscript] score is brought to a concertmaster—he may be a violinist—he is kindly disposed, he looks it over, and casually fastens on a passage 'that's bad for the fiddles, it doesn't hang just right, write it like this, they will play it better.' But that one phrase is the germ of the whole thing. 'Never mind, it will fit the hand better this way—it will sound better.' My God! what has sound got to do with music! The waiter brings the only fresh egg he has, but the man at breakfast sends it back because it doesn't fit his eggcup. Why can't music go out in the same way it comes in to a man, without having to crawl over a fence of sounds, thoraxes, catguts, wire, wood, and brass? […] The instrument!—there is the perennial difficulty—there is music's limitations. Why must the scarecrow of the keyboard—the tyrant in terms of the mechanism (be it Caruso or a Jew's-harp) stare into every measure?" (Ives 1920, 99–100).

I am sure many performers can find a relevant personal example, so I will also tell mine. While it does not belong to the Finnish repertoire, I include it since it was the main impetus for writing this chapter.

The piece I am referring to is *In die Tiefe der Zeit* for clarinet/bass clarinet and accordion by Toshio Hosokawa (b. 1955).[18] Originally scored for cello, accordion and strings (1994), the composer has made several duo arrangements of this work: combining the accordion with cello (1994), with viola (1996), and with clarinets (2001).[19] While the accordion part remains identical in the three versions, Hosokawa added major modifications in the other instrument's part, especially if we compare the version for clarinets with the other two, which remain practically the same.[20] It was then, when trying to compare the bass clarinet with the original cello part, that I started to wonder if the way the composer had notated the score corresponded exactly with the idea of sound that I thought he might have had in mind when doing so.

Although the parts are different, even quite so at some points, some gestures are still very recognisable in both versions, and a clear example is the very end of the piece (bars 210–212), which happens also in a very similar way a bit earlier (bars 186–189).

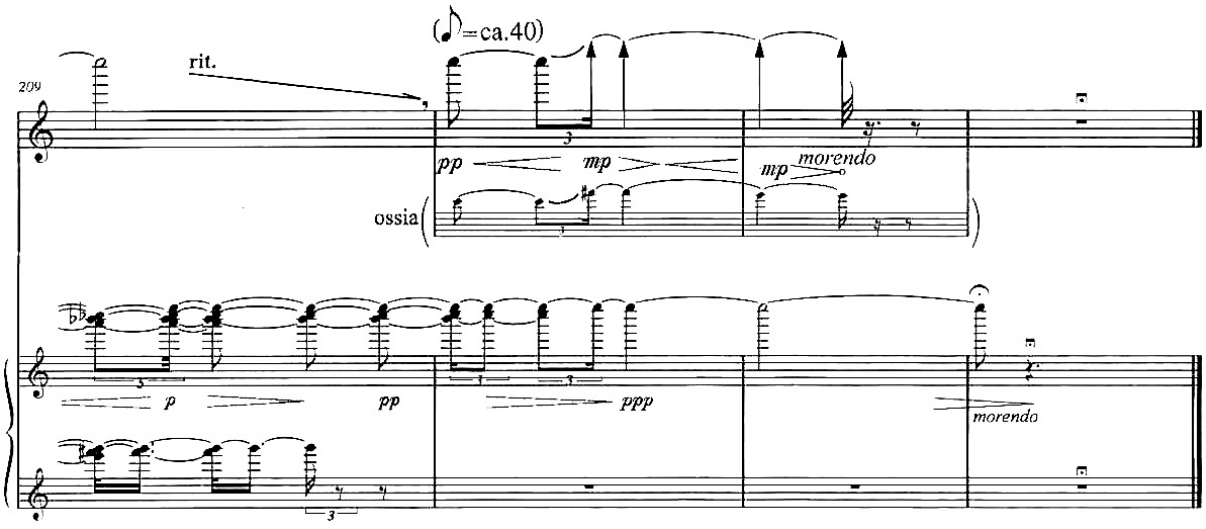

Figure 1: Ending of *In die Tiefe der Zeit* for clarinet and accordion (Hosokawa 2002, 17; Schott).[21]

[18] *In die Tiefe der Zeit* was part of the programme of my second doctoral concert (15 April 2014), which gave the piece its Finnish premiere.

[19] Approximately the first half of the piece is written for clarinet, and after that the clarinettist has to switch to the bass clarinet.

[20] From now on I will concentrate on the cello version, since it is the first duo arrangement envisioned by the composer, as well as the closest instrument to the bass clarinet in terms of register.

[21] As stated before, the piece was composed in 2001, but published in 2002. When mentioning a musical score, the reference I use corresponds with the publication year, which is not always the same as the composition year. To make sure of the year when it was composed, see the appendices or the different chapters of the thesis where each piece is mentioned.

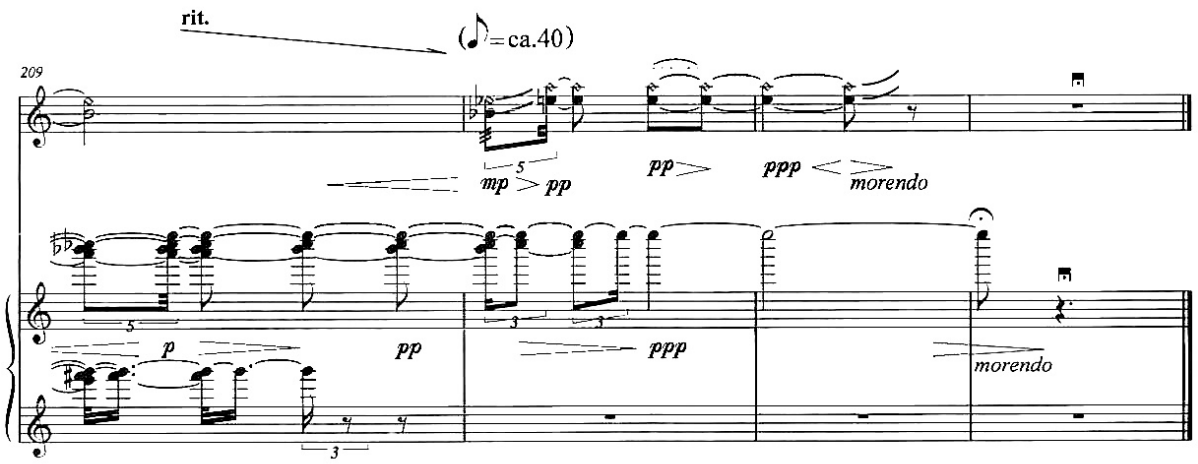

Figure 2: Ending of *In die Tiefe der Zeit* for violoncello and accordion (Hosokawa 1999, 15; Schott).

As seen in Figure 1, for the bass clarinet, Hosokawa writes an arrow pointing up with the previous instruction of "highest tone of the instrument" (Hosokawa 2002, 3). That means, or at least gives the impression, that the composer does not want any pitch in particular, but just a very high one, which clearly contradicts the E (harmonic) notated in the cello part (see Figure 2). Since the arrow is sometimes used as the symbol for the teeth-on-the-reed technique, one might decide to employ that as a 'solution' for the passage, as it is the way of getting the highest pitches. This is what actually happens in the only recording which I know of this piece, and it was my first approach to it as well, but soon I became upset since, for obvious technical reasons, it was not possible to land on that high note with a smoothly slurred *glissando* from the previous C, as notated. Missing the *glissando* was very unsatisfactory to me, as it is an important expressive gesture throughout the whole piece. Further, playing a very high, uncontrollable sound, as is most often the case when using the teeth-on-the-reed technique, would miss another very important aspect of the piece: the unison with the accordion, which at the same time is how the piece begins, although in this case not with the bass clarinet, but with the clarinet (see Figure 3).

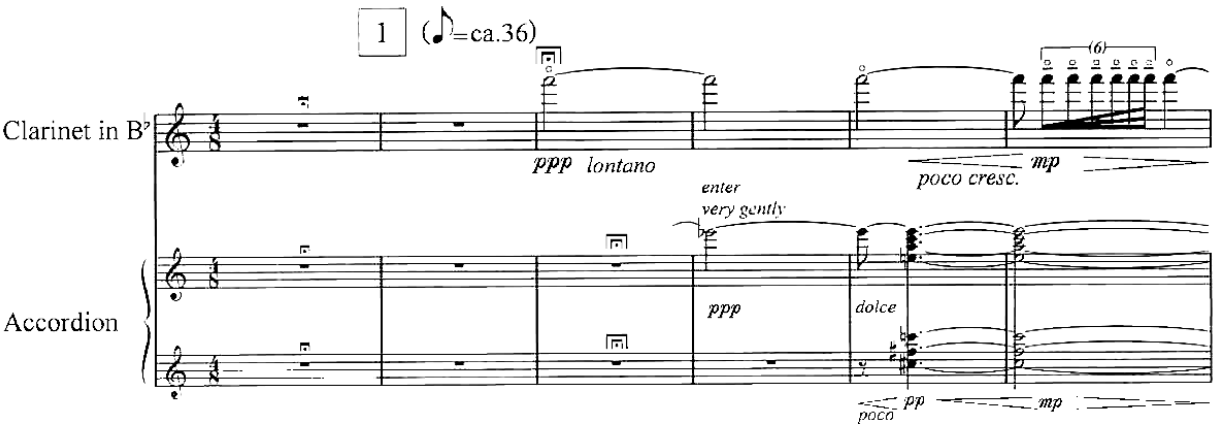

Figure 3: Beginning of *In die Tiefe der Zeit* for clarinet and accordion (Hosokawa 2002, 4; Schott).

In my opinion, this unison not only produces a spellbinding effect, but it is also a key element in the formal structure of the piece. It starts *lontano* on a single pitch initiated by the clarinet alone, which the accordion joins in unison after a long fermata. After a *crescendo* gesture, both instruments join forces for almost twenty minutes to generate a single resonant body—almost a living creature which breathes, evolves and morphs along the way until the piece comes to a close with the opposite gesture of the beginning: a lengthy *diminuendo*, *morendo*, back to nothing, where, after a unison with the bass clarinet, the accordion remains alone for the last fermata towards its final extinction (see Figure 1).

I finally concluded that I should interpret the music in the way that it is originally notated for the cello, even though it is written differently for the bass clarinet. I started then to find a way of reaching a high F-sharp (sounding E) in the fifth octave of the instrument from an expressive *glissando*. When I shared my thoughts about this passage with the composer, it became evident that he did not trust that the bass clarinet was capable of getting even close to the desired effect: "I wish you would play the last part of this piece by normal clarinet. It is impossible to play that high note. I will rewrite this part for clarinet. But no time" (Hosokawa 2014).[22]

Obviously, the cello benefits from a much more agile use of *glissandi*, especially in combination with high harmonics, as it happens in this case, but I still thought there was a way in which the bass clarinet was able to capture the true intentions of the composer.

[22] Note that the composer proposes an alternative (*ossia*) version to facilitate the passage for the bass clarinet by suddenly dropping the last two bars an octave (see Figure 1), but it seems he never thought of the possibility of writing it in the actual octave he used for the cello.

This reflection immediately raises the question about the fidelity of the performer to the composer's ideas and to the score, but this is quite an exceptional situation, since the composer himself is the one who does not seem to be faithful to his own intentions. Whether it was just lack of awareness about the possibilities of the instrument or whether the composer was advised to notate it that way, I am not sure. That part of the story is unknown to me, so I can only guess, but it is clear that the final result did not satisfy him either, as it got indirectly confirmed when he mentioned his intentions to rewrite the part and assign that passage to the clarinet.

After all, this reflection was not about what I as a performer wanted from the piece, nor even what Hosokawa as a composer wanted, but what I understood Hosokawa to have wanted. And it is this combination that makes the act of performing so interesting and complex at the same time: the encounter of the composer's intentions with the performer's understanding of them.

Assuming the ideal situation of performers who are sensitive and inspired musicians with the best intentions for the piece, I believe it is their duty to overcome the apparent difficulties in the score and look for the 'idea'—in the 'Ivesian' sense of the word, described earlier in this chapter—in order to find the best possible sound for it. As Theodor Adorno stated, the "musical score is never identical with the work; devotion to the text means the constant effort to grasp that which it hides" (Frisk & Östersjö 2006, 4).

PART II

FINNISH MUSIC FOR BASS CLARINET

5 FINLAND AND NEW MUSIC

Commissioning a new piece of music is always a doubly exciting adventure: firstly, because of the implicit responsibility of bringing the ideas of a composer to life and taking them to the stage for the very first time in the format of a new musical work; secondly, because of the artistic value of the collaboration between performer and composer during the process of composition.

In an article featuring a conversation with Esa-Pekka Salonen at the end of his 2018 residency with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Finnish composer and conductor shares a similar attitude towards performing new music with the following metaphor:

> "The part I play as the midwife, assisting in birth, is very exciting and very satisfying. To continue with the same analogy: the baby's out, we don't quite yet know who he is or she is. They start showing their personality later. By this, I'm trying to say that things need time" (Raskauskas 2018).

In the same article, Salonen also makes reference to new music from the point of view of the listener, maintaining that one feels freer when listening to a new piece than to the 'great classics' that we hear recurrently in the concert halls:

> "Going to hear a new music concert liberates you in a way that going to hear Brahms doesn't. You can say, 'I really hated that piece. It was awful.' Or you can say, 'I loved it!' When you say [you] 'hate Brahms,' you don't really. You can't have that feeling" (Raskauskas 2018).

With a new work the listener cannot have any kind of preconceived opinion since there has not yet been any contact with the music itself, neither with any previous performance of it nor with a recording or review. In Salonen's words, new music "hasn't been canonized yet […], doesn't come with that baggage" (Raskauskas 2018). I personally find this situation fascinating, both as a performer and as a member of the audience. And that explains why the five pieces I have commissioned are at the heart of my whole doctoral project, not only in the concert series but also in this thesis.

When I started to plan my doctoral concert series with the idea of commissioning new music, it was always clear that I wanted to do it in the spirit of mutual commitment and in close collaboration with the composers. One of my main interests was to have this music not only written for me, but also with me, although the degree of collaboration with each composer was always different. However, allowing plenty of time to envision the sort of pieces I wanted to commission and from which composers was, from the beginning, an important angle when looking at the project.

Trying to follow the principle of 'quality over quantity', I originally planned only a couple of premieres during the whole series of concerts. But as my doctoral project started to take on its own life, things gradually fell into place. Commissioning one piece per concert—an idea which originally sounded a bit unrealistic—started to look like an actual possibility. At the same time, it was also one of the reasons why this project spanned a relatively long period of time.

In fact, if there is a place where this can happen, that is probably Finland. Finnish composers are lucky to live in a country where they can still expect and demand a reasonable fee for their music.

The Finnish system of artists' grants is, for instance, a valuable asset to favour the creation of new music, enabling many composers and performers to concentrate on their craft and to have enough time for preparation and rehearsal of the new works. Institutions such as *Suomen Kulttuurirahasto* (Finnish Cultural Foundation), *Taiteen edistämiskeskus – Taike* (Arts Promotion Centre Finland) and several other foundations and organisations are, every year, an important source of funding for projects involving new pieces. Besides individual artists, also chamber ensembles, orchestras, choirs and wind bands are regular commissioners of new works from both established and younger composers.

The Finnish Broadcasting Company YLE is also a major channel for the promotion of Finnish new music by granting several commissions and broadcasting a good number of hours of new music, of which most of them are live concerts or studio recordings under their own sponsorship.

We should not forget the role of the numerous festivals that take place throughout the year as a public platform for composers and performers. Besides the obvious commitment of the festivals

devoted to contemporary music, such as *Musica Nova Helsinki* (founded in 1981 as *Helsinki Biennale*), *Tampere Biennale* (founded in 1986), *Musiikin aika* (Time of Music) in Viitasaari (founded in 1982) and the more recent and considerably smaller *Uuden Musiikin Lokakuu* (October of Contemporary Music) in Oulu (founded in 2005), it is also common that many other festivals keep a spot for premiering new works.

Consequently, all this activity has led Finnish audiences to get acquainted with contemporary music throughout the years. Contemporary music is given good coverage in mainstream concert halls, which allows the average concert-goer the opportunity of exploring it, instead of considering it right away as a 'no-go' area, as it sometimes happens. The public in Finland is aware of the constant creation of new works and has learnt not only to tolerate contemporary music, but also to enjoy it.

In addition, stimulating a more creative attitude towards music-making in children has become a major concern in Finland's music schools and institutes. "In the revised National Core Curriculum for Basic Education, adopted in 2016, composing is highlighted as an essential part of music teaching at schools, and composing and improvisation are expected to join singing, playing instruments and listening to music as everyday activities in music lessons", says Anu Ahola (2017, 44) in her article *Composing is for everyone*.

In short: in few other countries do musicians, institutions and audiences invest as much time, energy and resources in exploring what their contemporary composers are creating as they do in Finland. Despite these conditions, which are certainly more adequate than in many other countries, I do not mean to say that there are no obstacles when undertaking the commission of a new work, but the support and the value that composing as a profession is given in Finland obviously make things easier.

Behind my five commissions there has always been a sense of adventure and the aim to enrich the repertoire with personal contributions that can set the grounds for further explorations and development. Given all the experimentation that has taken place during the last decades, regarding extended playing techniques, instrumental combinations, interdisciplinarity between music and the other arts, and so forth, I am aware that it is almost impossible to come up with something radically new. Nevertheless, when planning each commission, it was always important that the factor of innovation and originality was somehow present.

In the next five chapters, I will explore in detail these five new works and I will use some of their more distinctive musical features as the articulation point to go through a selection of Finnish music for bass clarinet. I will also continue dealing with some of the challenges that have been generally discussed in the previous chapters, and that each of these works particularly proposes to the performer.

6 IN-AUDITO

6.1 Bass clarinet and electronics

The incorporation of electronic media into the practice of composition was one of the greatest musical innovations of the twentieth century. According to Supper (1997/2004, 28), the term *elektronische Musik* (electronic music) was employed for the first time in 1949 when German physicist Werner Meyer-Eppler placed it in the title of his book *Elektrische Klangerzeugung: Elektronische Musik und synthetische Sprache* (Meyer-Eppler 1949). Since then, it has been constantly redefined while going hand-in-hand with advances in sound technology. Nowadays, rapid technological developments have resulted in a great deal of experimentation which itself continues steadily to expand.

Intra (1971), by Dutch composer Ton Bruynèl (1934–1998), is, to my knowledge, the first piece for bass clarinet and electronics in history. Since then, composers have not ceased to writing bass clarinet music with the assistance of technology, which today encompasses a vast spectrum of possibilities. Some of them were explored in my first doctoral concert (13 December 2012), for which I commissioned *IN-AUDITO*, for bass clarinet and live electronics, from Spanish-born composer and sound artist Josué Moreno (b. 1980).

6.2 *IN-AUDITO*, for bass clarinet and live electronics, by Josué Moreno (2012)

> "These forms do not aim toward a climax, do not prepare the listener to expect a climax, and their structures do not contain the usual stages found in the development curve of the whole duration of a normal composition. […] They are forms in a state of always having already commenced, which could go on as they are for an eternity. […] This is not an eternity that begins at the end of time, but an eternity that is present in every moment. […] I have made a strict difference between the concepts of 'beginning' and 'starting', 'ending' and 'stopping'. […] Thus 'beginning' and 'ending' are appropriate to closed development forms, which I have also referred to as dramatic forms, and 'starting' and 'stopping' are suitable for open moment forms. That is why I can speak about an infinite form even though a performance is limited in its duration because of practical reasons" (Kramer 1988, 201–204).

These are some of the ideas that Karlheinz Stockhausen formulated about his concept of 'moment form' in an eponymous article he wrote in 1960, and they could be perfectly applied to Moreno's *IN-AUDITO*, which certainly proposes an interesting approach to dealing with temporality. It invites the audience to embark on the act of listening in a 'non-traditional' way: listening slowly, deeply, not only in linear time but also vertically, experiencing every moment with equal intensity.

IN-AUDITO is a listening journey through the sounds of a bass clarinet extended by live electronics. Sometimes minuscule—almost to the point of non-existence—but always full of beautiful subtleties, these sonorities are fully exploited by means of microphone techniques and digital signal processing, which open up a new world of nuances that would not be otherwise audible. For that purpose, the piece calls for three different microphones: one pointing at the bell of the instrument for the lowest frequencies, another one at the middle, and a headset microphone to capture all the sounds produced by the different embouchure techniques the composer is asking. The electroacoustic sounds are created exclusively by resonating and transforming in many different ways what the performer is playing live, but without including any kind of pre-recorded material or concrete sound.

Intrigued by all of the meaningful variations that the slightest change in the player's sound production can make, Moreno enriches the sonic possibilities of the instrument by adding different phonemes to the ordinary playing: 'j' (to be pronounced as in the Spanish language in words such as '*jamón*'), 's' (to be pronounced as in 'Sibelius'), and 'rr' (a strong 'r' sound, similar to the one produced when doing *frullato*). He also adds different embouchure positions—normal, semi-open, and open—which range from instrumental (normal embouchure) to purely vocal sounds (open embouchure). In the score, the different articulations are represented by adding the corresponding consonant below each note, and the embouchure positions by a three-level graphic placed above the note, where the lower line corresponds to the normal embouchure, the middle one to the semi-open position and the upper line to the open embouchure (see Figures 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8).

Figure 4: Excerpt from *IN-AUDITO* (Moreno 2012, 5). Play a B while producing an 'r' sound with a normal embouchure.[23]

Figure 5: Excerpt from *IN-AUDITO* (Moreno 2012, 5). Play an A while producing an 's' sound with a semi-open embouchure.

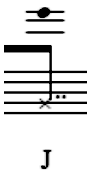

Figure 6: Excerpt from *IN-AUDITO* (Moreno 2012, 5). Play a G while producing a 'j' sound with an open embouchure.[24]

The transitions are represented by connecting the origin and end points with the abbreviation *gliss.* (as standing for *glissando*), indicating that one has to move gradually from one playing situation to the other.

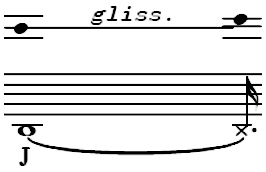

Figure 7: Excerpt from *IN-AUDITO* (Moreno 2012, 5). Play a B starting with a semi-open embouchure position and gradually change to an open embouchure, while always producing a 'j' sound.

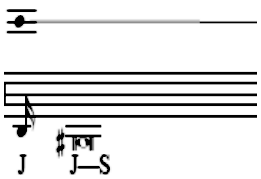

Figure 8: Excerpt from *IN-AUDITO* (Moreno 2012, 9). Play a G-sharp and make a gradual transition between the articulating consonants: from an initial 'j' to a final 's'. The semi-open embouchure position applies to the whole passage.

[23] When the normal embouchure position applies to an individual figure, the composer avoids using the three-level graphic to favour clarity.

[24] In the open embouchure position, the composer uses a cross as notehead, to clarify that the sound to be produced is purely vocal as the embouchure is totally open.

The combination of these two parameters—articulation and embouchure position—in every possible way creates a very particular acoustic space. It gives to each sound or musical gesture a unique status that is constantly destabilizing the sound continuum, thereby avoiding the classical conception of sound production and phrasing. In fact, the very first musical gesture already presents what will be the predominant aesthetic during the rest of the piece: a very fragile and unstable sound environment (see Figure 9).

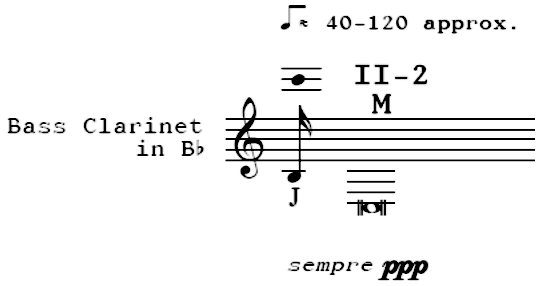

Figure 9: Beginning of *IN-AUDITO* (Moreno 2012, 4).

This sound world is enriched by the insertion of long multiphonics, which are a key factor in the musical development and timbral identity of the work. In combination with the pauses used by the composer as structural elements, these sustained multiphonics are essential in achieving 'co-hear-ence' within this unusual sonic landscape, as seen in Figure 10.

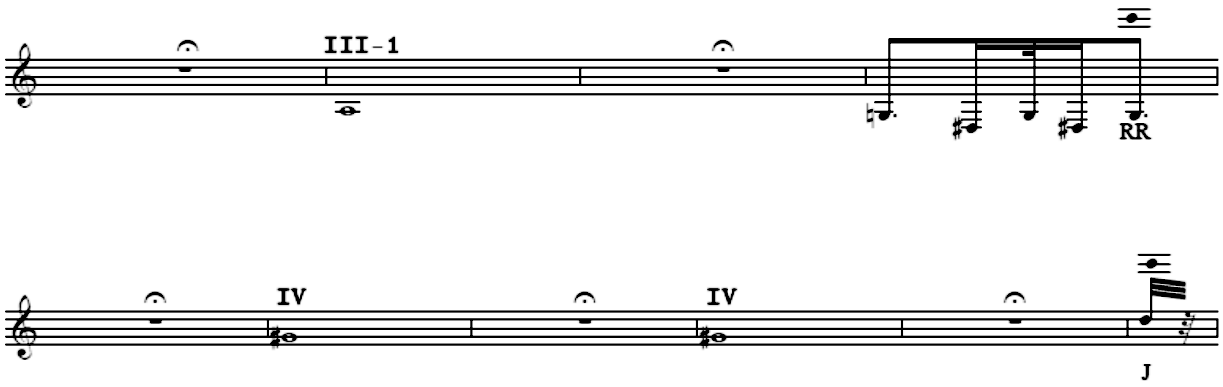

Figure 10: Excerpt from *IN-AUDITO* (Moreno 2012, 9).

From the wide scope of possibilities I played for the composer when he asked me about different 'complex' sonorities on the bass clarinet in one of our working sessions, Moreno chose six different multiphonics that in the score are listed as I, II-1, II-2, III-1, III-2 and IV. As mentioned, they finally became a very important part of the piece as Moreno keeps using them repeatedly through the first two sections. Although he adds the fingering for each of them, a more detailed description would probably be needed since they all have different nuances, and

some of them even use the same fingering to achieve a different result. For instance, II-1 and II-2 are both fingered as a low C:

- II-1 is achieved by breaking that low C and trying to reach the highest possible pitch with that broken sound, also known as spectral multiphonic.[25]
- II-2 also looks for a very high pitch, but by totally different means. Instead of keeping the low C as the base of the multiphonic like in II-1, the point here is to eliminate the low note and aim directly for the highest frequencies of the harmonic series with a soft, airy, whistling sound that uncovers all its richness thanks to the amplification.

This performer's input to the composition could be an example of what British composer Brian Ferneyhough (b. 1943) calls "their box of tricks" (Boros & Toop 1995, 370) referring to the individual qualities of the performers when collaborating with a composer in the creation of a new piece. There might be certain aspects that, while totally clear for a particular performer as the piece has been thought for him or her and according to his or her suggestions, might be far from obvious for other players.

As *IN-AUDITO* evolves, so does the material towards a central section where ordinary playing takes over for a while, even with the use of slurs, which was strongly avoided at the beginning (see Figure 11); but soon the original situation with different articulating phonemes and embouchure positions returns in the second section.

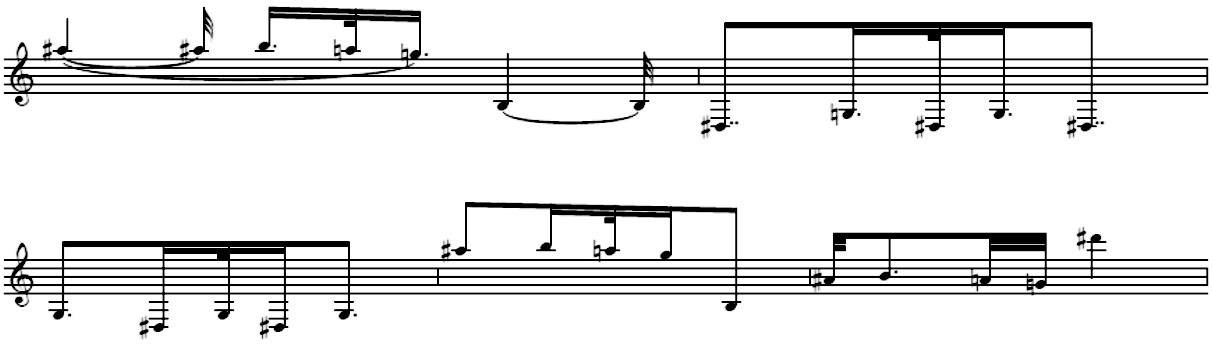

Figure 11: Ending of the first section of *IN-AUDITO* (Moreno 2012, 6).

[25] Spectral multiphonics are those that are created by overblowing a low fundamental, but do not need any special fingering.

The third and final section of the piece is a colourful cantus firmus-like microintervallic melody in which, under the indication of 'phantom sounds', the composer makes use of underblown multiphonics (see Figure 12).[26]

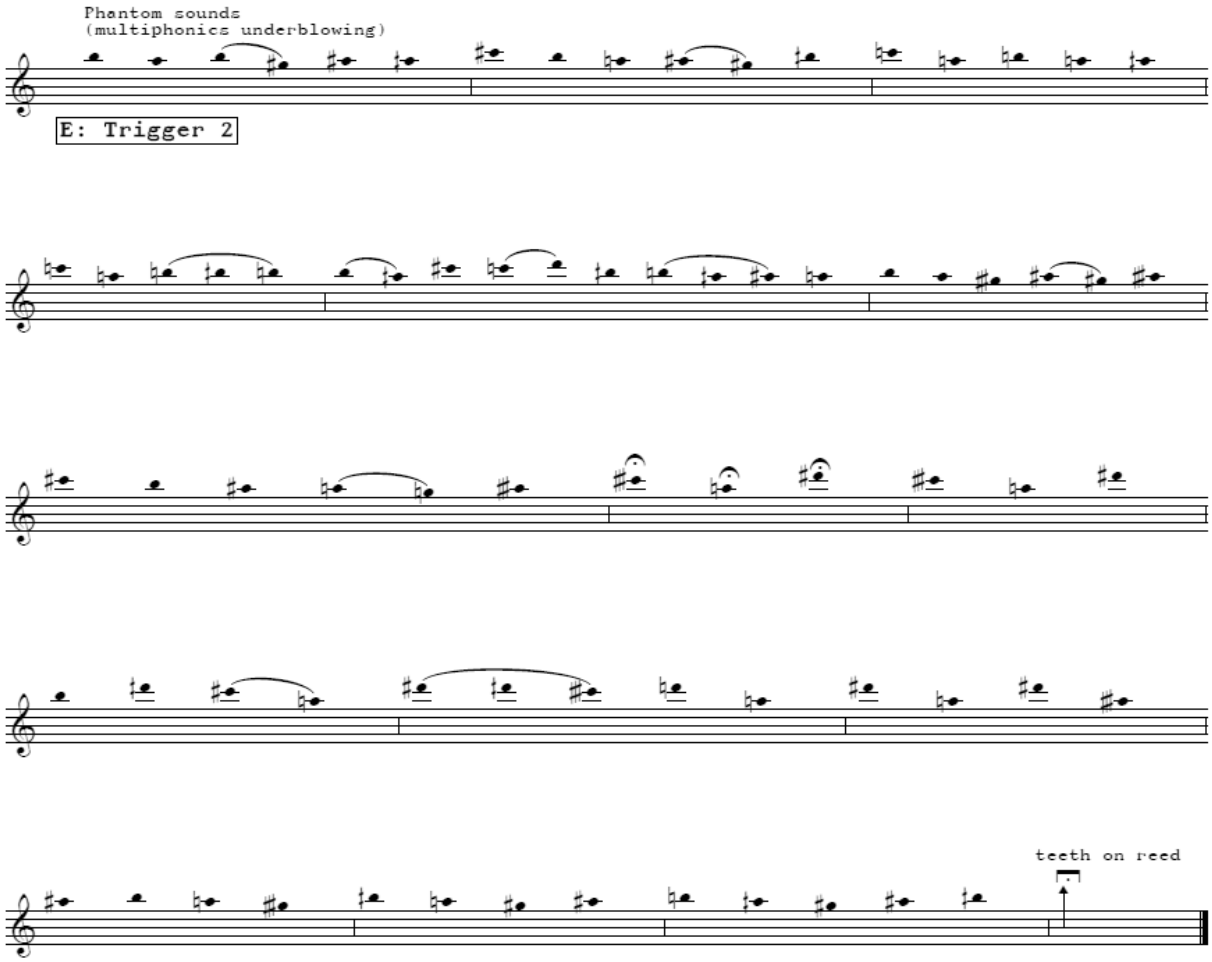

Figure 12: Final section of *IN-AUDITO* (Moreno 2012, 10).

Besides being characterised by the musical material used in each of them, the three sections of the piece are also defined by the way the system of the live electronics behaves. It is as if the listener is entering a different room in each section, with the last one having a sort of cathartic effect, almost purifying our ears from the previous intense activity that was full of 'micro-events', very tightly intertwined together. This complexity arises from the interaction between the bass clarinet and the electroacoustic sounds—a mixture that results in, for the most part, a

[26] Surprisingly, this type of multiphonics is quite rarely found in the extended techniques books (some of which have been mentioned earlier in this thesis), but can produce a charming effect. As in the previously mentioned spectral multiphonics (overblown), these do not need any special fingering either, but are based on a higher pitch. The undertone appears when that pitch is played with somehow less focused air pressure than what one would normally use, combined with soft dynamics. In *IN-AUDITO*, only the fundamental pitches are notated, without specifying the resulting undertones.

restless continuum. Nevertheless, this restlessness only happens on a deeper level when one goes 'under the skin of the piece', but the compound texture on the surface is perceived as strongly meditative music, almost hypnotic: indeed, a peculiar but very skilfully created balance between calmness and intensity.

According to my experience with *IN-AUDITO*, the bass clarinettist needs to immerse themselves into the music in the same way that an attentive listener would and therefore develop a very active listening while performing. This is, in my opinion, a crucial aspect to achieve a successful result, according to the composer's intentions and ideas towards music-making, where the performer's freedom and autonomy to make decisions during performance have a very important role.

During the working sessions we had both before and after the premiere, we went through important performing aspects related to the aesthetics of Moreno's music, such as the assumption that music is a space art instead of a time-based art. Moreno definitely does not meet the profile of a traditional composer, given the interdisciplinarity of the projects he usually takes part in, mostly dominated by the field of sound art and with fewer and fewer works composed exclusively for the stage of a conventional concert hall. Even though more detailed information about the multiphonics and other aspects of the piece would be added, I personally believe it would be difficult to interpret it for a performer who is lacking the information given above, which definitely cannot be deduced from a traditional reading of the score. For instance, the score does not prescribe any particular instructions about the role that the performer's freedom has in this piece, but the tempo marking at the beginning already contains a valuable information to this respect, although it might sound almost comical at first: quaver equalling 40–120 approx. (see Figure 9). Combined with the pauses that I described before as structural elements, this flexibility gives the space for the performer to really listen, to decide on the right moment to go on with the next musical gesture.

Even after a close contact and collaboration with the composer, however, it took me a while to find my way to use those tools that Moreno gives to the performer. The premiere of *IN-AUDITO* was, as we thought then, a highly successful performance. But after having performed the piece together several times, those rough 17 minutes that the first performance took have evolved in a very natural way to a duration of easily 25–30 minutes, just by practicing the very particular way of listening that the composer proposes. If I listen now to the recording of the premiere,

everything feels kind of in a hurry, as if I was too busy being the performer that I did not take the time to be a listener as well. Also, our way of talking about the music has changed quite a bit from merely technical aspects, such as where to place the microphones, how to blow the air to get the desired effect, and so on, to a much deeper level of expressiveness, which was not very obvious in the first contact with the piece.

This evolution in the way of reacting to the piece or thinking about it has been very revealing for me as a performer, and could be a good example for the analogy that Esa-Pekka Salonen draws in the aforementioned article between the midwife assisting in birth and the performer of a new piece of music when he says:

> "The baby's out, we don't quite yet know who he is or she is. They start showing their personality later. By this, I'm trying to say that things need time" (Raskauskas 2018).

6.3 Finnish music for bass clarinet and electronics

If the first piece for bass clarinet and electronics was, as mentioned, Bruynèl's *Intra* from 1971, we must wait more than ten years to track the first Finnish piece combining the bass clarinet with electronics. It was not a solo piece, but a piece for three clarinets, bass clarinet and tape: ***Sirba*** (1982), by **Herman Rechberger** (1947–2022).

Although Rechberger's style was always very eclectic, folk music often played a significant role in his music from quite early on. As stated in the notes with which Rechberger (1982) accompanies the score of *Sirba*, the inspiration for this composition was the virtuosity of the folk clarinettists from the Balkans. More precisely, 'sirba' is a Romanian folk dance, which the composer alternates in the piece with a much more rhythm-free and lyrical counterpart that traditionally precedes the 'sirba' dance—'doina'—for which he seemed to get inspired by natural sounds. Both the rhythmical folk-like elements and the more peaceful, nature-inspired

sections always appear under the guises of experimental techniques[27], graphic notation[28], improvisation[29] and aleatoricism[30].

As Rechberger (2021) mentioned in a conversation we had a couple of months before he suddenly passed away, "the tape sound material was mostly collected from nature in Moldova, and there is also an extensive use of a modulated cimbalom". The whole material was processed in YLE experimental studio, where he was the artistic director from 1979 to 1984.

Also from the same period, we find a young **Magnus Lindberg** (b. 1958) and his extreme, sometimes even aggressive and violent, language of the 1980s:

> "'Only the extreme is interesting—striving for a balanced totality is nowadays an impossibility. An original mode of expression can only be achieved through the marginal—the hypercomplex combined with the primitive', writes Lindberg of his thinking at that time" (Nieminen 1988, 4).

However, Lindberg never placed the bass clarinet alone in the centre of the spotlight, but as a part of a much bigger picture. His first piece of this kind was ***Action-Situation-Signification***, from 1982, for four musicians (bass clarinettist, pianist, percussionist, cellist) and electronics, written for the *Toimii Ensemble*—a sort of laboratory to experiment with new ideas and ways of presenting music, founded that same year by Lindberg, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Otto Romanowski, Anssi Karttunen, Kari Kriikku and Juhani Liimatainen.[31]

> "Toimii tries to avoid getting set in any particular cast. It meets only as necessary: when there is a problem to be solved. In most cases the problem is a piece of music […]" (Nieminen 1988, 9).

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[27] Besides their own instruments, the quartet should also have extra mouthpieces (for clarinet and for bass clarinet), by which they have to employ a variety of ways to produce the sound, such as inhaling air through them, modifying the pitch with the position of the palm of the hand, pressing with the lips, etc.

[28] Towards the end, the composer asks for a bass clarinet "*GRANDE SOLO virtuosissimo*" (Rechberger 1982, 7) that should last for about one minute with the only notation of a big triangle full of dots, circles, lines and other geometric shapes of different sizes.

[29] The first 'doina' section, around minute 4, starts without any notation and with only one instruction for the whole quartet: "Imitation: Bird calls, rooster crows, chirping, bleating, tweeting, etc. Think of a summer morning in the country side or something similar" (Rechberger 1982, 5).

[30] In the middle section, the composer proposes two minutes of different fragments to choose from in free order for all the four musicians simultaneously.

[31] As if to emphasise what is possible and achievable over what might appear to be impossible or unrealisable, the word *Toimii*, in Finnish, means 'it works'.

It seems the matter at hand this time was exploring the relation between natural and instrumental sounds, although, as Risto Nieminen (1986, 37) points in an article written a few years after the premiere, "Lindberg was not interested in imitating natural sounds on instruments per se but rather in creating continua between these two different types of sounds [natural and instrumental]".

To experiment with that issue, Magnus Lindberg wrote *Action-Situation-Signification* consisting of eight movements, which follow each other *attacca*, with the exception of the sixth one: *Earth 1*, *The Sea*, *Wood*, *Rain*, *Metal*, *Fire*, *Wind*, and *Earth 2*. The connection between the movements is very often a tape part made from recordings of the natural elements that give name to some of the movements. The tape either fades in from the sounds created by the instruments or fades out into them. In this alternation between the recordings and the instrumental sounds, the four-musician ensemble contributes to the compound with a highly heterogeneous arsenal of sounds, as it is hard to find a single passage that treats the instruments in a traditional way. Playing on and behind the bridge, using different bow pressures and tuning down some of the strings in the cello; using nails, different mallets, thimbles in the fingers, and plucking, strumming or scraping the strings in the piano; and using the voice through the instrument in many different ways or the mouthpiece alone in the bass clarinet, plus a long etcetera, are the norm here, giving the piece a strong improvisatory character. In addition, the colour of the percussion is very present throughout, as all the parts employ a great variety of percussion instruments and objects. Among other things, the bass clarinet part asks for a bass drum, a tam tam, maracas, a chocalho (shaker), a raganella (cog rattle), a güiro, a cabaça, a suspended cymbal, a tambourine, chimes, sandpaper, different pieces of wood, brushes, marbles, a pail of water to be splashed with the hand, ceramic, glass and stone blocks, a double reed, grains, a paper tube, stones, a piece of polystyrene foam, chains, and two wine glasses. Moreover, the bass clarinettist must also double with contrabass clarinet in the second movement, and with recorder in the seventh.

Also for the *Toimii Ensemble*, one year later Lindberg started the composition of a piece that would mark his breakthrough: ***Kraft*** (1983–1985), for clarinettist, cellist, pianist, two percussionists, live electronics and a massive symphony orchestra. As in *Action-Situation-Significaiton*, all the soloists (including the conductor, who also plays a whistle, a wine glass and has a solo speaking part) play a multiplicity of percussion instruments, and move around the hall through different setups or 'play stations', as it is marked in the score.

In order to increase the sonic possibilities (and the noise level), the whole percussion section is supplemented with a sound world that does not exist within the classical collection of metallic percussion instruments: a huge assemblage of scrap metal collected from a local junkyard of the city in which the piece is performed, as Lindberg (2010) said in an interview on the occasion of the New York premiere of *Kraft*:

> "I was living in Berlin those days, and that was the time when the alternative music scenery in Berlin was very strong: post-punk music groups like *Einstürzende Neubauten* had street drills on stage and made an amazing noise with that kind of non-tonal pop music. […] In a way, it was a shock for me to see that this kind of music was going on. […] I was jealous about the sound, the huge forces they managed to put together, and I thought: why couldn't we do this with the forces of a symphony orchestra? […] A performance of this piece takes a visit to the local scrapyard to bring in plenty of junk. I wanted to include instruments that produce noise: everything from sandpaper to stones, everything from metallic scrap where you have small pieces of metal that you make noises with, up till the big, dry, kind of loud, heavy pieces of metal that you can find."

Besides the bass clarinet, the clarinettist has to go through the E-flat, B-flat and contrabass clarinets, as well as different percussion instruments. With an abundance of crotchets and *glissandi* in between them, the bass clarinet section, which Lindberg uses to close the piece, is the shortest of them all.

A year after completing *Kraft*, Lindberg wrote ***Ur*** (1986) for an ensemble of five players (clarinet doubling on bass clarinet, violin, cello, double bass, and piano doubling on synthesiser) and live electronics. "The composer has even described it as a chamber music version of Kraft" (Korhonen 2001, 94).

After the first change of instruments the clarinettist has to go through during the piece, the one-and-a-half-page bass clarinet solo is actually a fine example of Lindberg's brutal style at that time: wild *crescendos* from *niente* to *ff* in the lowest notes of the instrument, alternated with fast explosions in higher registers, very often culminated with accents and *sffz*. The use of the voice while playing, especially in the highest pitches, although not as prominent as in other Lindberg's pieces, also contributes to that harshness. On the other hand, the strings accompany the passage with intense microtonal *glissandi* up and down, *sul ponticello*, while the piano reinforces some of the accents of the bass clarinet part. A long A-flat in the fourth octave

dissolves into a 'seagull-effect' in the cello to give way to more active parts in the strings. After that, the bass clarinet merges with the rest of the ensemble, with a no less demanding part, but leaving room for the others, including the live electronics, to be in the lead.

Focusing on the actual repertoire for solo instrument and electronics, in 1978 we find what might be the first Finnish piece of this kind: ***Gymel*** for bassoon and tape op. 39, by **Paavo Heininen** (1938–2022)—one of the most influential figures of Finnish modernism,[32] whose extensive output expanded more than six decades.[33] Twenty years later, in 1998, he made a bass clarinet version of this piece. In *Gymel*, the tape contains only sounds of water in different manifestations that the composer classifies as drops, babbling, splashes and surging waves, to which a great variety of bass clarinet episodes are contrasted, very often in clear alternation between the soloist and the tape.

Also in the 1990s and with a tape part somehow reminding to natural environments, we can find another two interesting works for bass clarinet and electronics:

saari, rannaton (an island, shoreless) from 1994 by **Hannu Pohjannoro** (b. 1963) is actually the first Finnish work for bass clarinet and electronics: "A collage made up of a live performer and tape versus a tape of a bass clarinet and the sounds of wood, sand, metal, glass, etc." (Pohjannoro 1998). In its roaming over the sounds of the tape, the solo part is mainly organised by episodes that give the music space and time to breath, thus, letting the nuances of all those materials used to create the tape shine in dialogue with the bass clarinet. Towards the end, the composer inserts a brief 'solo tape' section and a one-minute-long cadenza that the bass clarinettist has to improvise. Both solos are followed by a final outburst of more energetic elements and louder dynamics, just before returning to the pensive character of the opening for concluding the piece.

[32] Kaija Saariaho (2022) used the expression *The path-opener* to title her text remembering Paavo Heininen one month after his passing.

[33] The same year, Rechberger composed his *KV 622 II bis* for clarinet and tape; and one year later, in 1979, Usko Meriläinen (1930–2004) wrote what has already become a Finnish 'classic', at least in the flute repertoire: *Suvisoitto* (summer sounds) for flute and grasshoppers, with a tape material that in the words of the composer "is drawn solely from the familiar chirp of grasshoppers—our own Finnish insects, foreign cicadas, and even Japanese meadow crickets" (Heiniö 1990, 4).

Le Fantôme Du Vent, for bass clarinet, tape and live electronics (1999) by **Jovanka Trbojević** (1963–2017) shares the atmospheric and evocative character of Pohjannoro's piece, but the Yugoslavian-born composer takes it to a much bigger-scale work. In this case, the tape part contains sound material recorded at a skating rink with closeup microphones intended to simulate the sighing sound of the wind. A brilliant use of the multiphonic possibilities of the bass clarinet carries the composition from beginning to end, with the composer paying special attention to the variations in tone and colour created by different multiphonics based on the same note.[34] With the aid of live electronics, which consists mainly of a 'freeze' effect to prolong certain sounds, the overlapping of those diverse multiphonics produce a very appealing result. The composer makes a skilful combination of those static moments with more violent eruptions that keeps the tension throughout almost twenty minutes of music for the listener to create an own fantasy or metaphor for the 'the ghost of the wind', as it is evoked by the French title the composer gave to the piece.

Juhani Nuorvala (b. 1961) takes a diametrically different approach to the concept of bass clarinet and tape with his rhythmically driven ***Concertino*** for bass clarinet and soundtrack (2001/2009), inspired by the sound world of dance clubs and techno music. As a remarkable feature, it is important to mention that the composer makes use of just intonation, consisting of pure, non-tempered intervals derived from the natural overtone series. *Concertino* is based on the first movement of Nuorvala's *Clarinet Concerto* (1998), with the orchestra being replaced by the electronic soundtrack. After the original version for basset clarinet (2001), the composer has adapted the piece for trumpet (2004), bass clarinet (2009) and electric kantele (2014).

As mentioned, technology has evolved greatly in the last decades, and making music with the assistance of electronic media nowadays offers countless possibilities, including those that provide not only an acoustical input in performance but also a visual one. Multimedia pieces for bass clarinet have not been particularly tackled by Finnish composers, but we can find an interesting example in ***Heinä*** (grass), from 2018, by **Riikka Talvitie** (b. 1970).

[34] Trbojević already used a very similar technique in her *opus* 1 from 1991, *...kada bih mog'o drag...* (...if I could just be loved...), scored for mezzo-soprano, bass clarinet, double bass and percussion.

Heinä was created in collaboration with dramaturge Pipsa Lonka, and includes not only a bass clarinet part, but also real-time sound processing, a documentary video and a pre-recorded vocal part.[35] The 26-minute video has several sections:

The first one is divided in what Talvitie and Lonka call asemic poems.[36] There are four of these poems written by the grass, to which Talvitie has composed four different bass clarinet solos, as if trying to help to understand or even recreate the movement of the grass in the paper. Each poem remains as a fixed image on the screen while the bass clarinettist performs the corresponding music.

After that, a documentary video follows showing different images of the grass moved by the wind, while a voice-over presents to the audience the origin of the idea for the piece. The text, that comes in three parts, also opens other reflections that are essential to the conception of the work, such as considering that the grass, as a non-human collaborator in the project, has been the one who has freely written those poems, in contrast to our need to intervene and to put the human figure at the centre, "when this was just supposed to... wonder and let be... to allow silence to occur".[37] This is where the electronics appear, first as the background of the video in the form of several superimposed layers of a pre-recorded soprano voice, and later evolving towards different vocalisations and guttural sounds, as if translating several parts of a 'grass poem' that are highlighted in the screen. The bass clarinettist also joins with another 'movement', which, as in the first four sections makes frequent use of multiphonics and airy sounds, but this time with the aid of the electronics. The visual material consists of a more detailed view of several parts of the 'grass poem' flowing from right to left on the screen, as if inviting the audience to read or decipher the unintelligible text to our human logic.

After the third part of the documentary is shown on the screen, the piece ends with a last video: a white board placed on a music stand over a snowy landscape, with some inked grass next to it moved by the wind. The 'soundtrack' here is a mix of the actual sound of the wind taken by the video, the electronics with the pre-recorded soprano imitating the wind, and a free

[35] By soprano Tuuli Lindeberg.

[36] Asemic writing is a form of writing that has no discernible semantic content. In this case, they looked for grass with brush-like tips to which they added some ink and placed a paper close by, so when the wind moved the grass, it started to draw lines—like writing in an abstract language that cannot be read, and therefore has an open subjective meaning.

[37] Fragment of *Voice-over 3* in *Heinä*, with Pipsa Lonka as the speaker.

improvisation of the bass clarinettist that also has to simulate the sound of the different wind strengths, both of the real one and of the imitation that the soprano voice is doing in the electronics. Meanwhile, the grass continues its 'silent writing' on the white board, until the image fades to white and the sound gradually becomes softer and disappears as well.

Behind this piece, which Talvitie (2021) claims to be "purposefully different each time", there is an interesting process of artistic research and reflection upon very diverse topics, such as ecological issues, interdisciplinarity and border-crossing in the arts, the limitations of musical notation, the autonomy of a musical work, and the origin of language and writing.

7 A FRAGILE PEACE

7.1 Chamber music for bass clarinet. A focus on duo combinations

The extensive growth of the bass clarinet repertoire in the last decades is, to a great extent, due to the establishment of several new ensembles by some of the most prominent performers, especially in the 1980s and 1990s. Besides the aforementioned pioneering efforts of *Due Boemi di Praga* to promote the music for bass clarinet and piano, as well as the need of *Fusion Moderne* to add a new dimension to that repertoire, some years later we find more innovative proposals, although they are no longer considered a curiosity: *Accroche Note* with female voice, *Duo Novair* with accordion, *Duo Contemporain* with percussion, etc.[38]

Even though just part of the huge repertoire we have today was specifically written for these ensembles, they have all inspired many composers, directly or indirectly, to write music for the bass clarinet. Likewise, many performers have taken those pre-existing ensembles as a role model and decided to create their own ones, for which more bass clarinet music has been composed.

In my second doctoral concert (15 April 2014), besides focusing on pre-existing ensembles, I supplemented the programme of duos with an instrumental combination that, so far, had not been much explored: a duo with guitar, which was specially commissioned for the occasion from Canadian-born composer Matthew Whittall (b. 1975).

7.2 *A fragile peace*, for bass clarinet, two scordatura guitars (one player) and live electronics/fixed media,[39] by Matthew Whittall (2013)

'Bass clarinet and guitar? What an odd couple!', one might think. And that was, in a way, my initial thought when I came up with the idea of commissioning a piece for this combination. On the other hand, and being always in search of new experiences, the chance of exploring a relatively new ensemble was the necessary motivation for carrying this project further. The

[38] The repertoire for bass clarinet and percussion will be discussed more in detail in chapter 8.

[39] It is important to notice that most of the time, when the music is actually written out, *A fragile peace* is just an acoustic duo for bass clarinet and guitar. The electronics only appear in the last section, mainly improvised, when the guitarist switches to the second guitar, as it will be explained later.

combination of bass clarinet and guitar has very few examples in the existing literature, so I thought it would be an interesting adventure. And according to his own notes, Matthew Whittall had a similar reaction to my commission:

> "Every once in while, you get asked to write for a combination of instruments so bizarre that they shouldn't even be in the same room, let alone the same piece. A duo for bass clarinet and guitar is about as weird and problematic as it gets, and my first instinct was to refuse. But the lure of an ensemble with few (if any) precedents, of a completely open field, was a powerful one" (Whittall 2013a).

The result could not have been more rewarding, thanks to the particular approach that the composer took to the acoustic principles of each member of the duo. Both instruments seem to be very distant from each other at many levels, and that situation also inspired the idea of the title, as Whittall (2013a) continues:

> "The title as such doesn't have much to do with the music, referring more to the potential for discord and imbalance implied by the combination rather than any real conflict. Rather, my goal was to create a mutually supportive, easygoing back-and-forth, one that brings the instruments as close together sonically as possible and bridges the huge gap—dynamic, timbral, intonational and textural—that exists between them, which meant resorting to some extremes."

One of those extremes is probably the use of two guitars, both retuned and based on the bass clarinet's lowest note: a sounding B-flat (see Figures 13 and 14). In fact, *A fragile peace* is conceived by thinking of the bass clarinet using its full length as an overtone resonator.

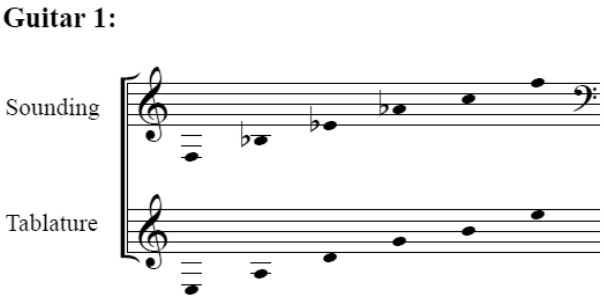
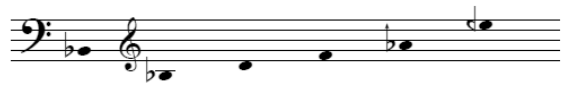


Figure 13: Scordatura of the first guitar in *A fragile peace* (Whittall 2013b). It is tuned in standard tuning, one semitone higher, so upward from F–B-flat–E-flat–A-flat–C–F. This makes the tone brighter and louder, and puts the instruments' standing intonation in B-flat.

Guitar 2:

The 2nd guitar is tuned to a B♭ overtone spectrum, as follows:



The easiest tuning method is to tune strings 5-1 in unison (or unison harmonics) to a harmonic node on the low B♭ 6 string. The tuning for each string is given below, along with the closest fret number f or the required harmonic node. Arrows indicate that the node is found above the indicated fret.

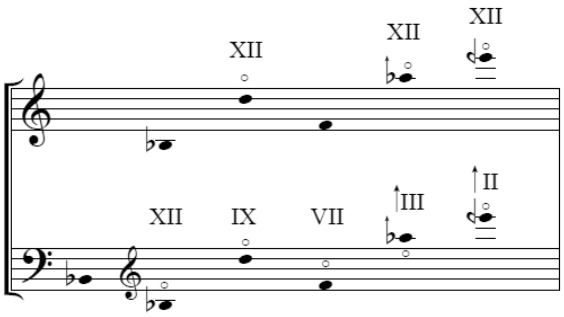


Figure 14: Scordatura of the second guitar in *A fragile peace* (Whittall 2013b). It is tuned to overtones of B-flat as follows: B-flat (1st string tuned down a tritone)–B-flat (8va from 6th string)–D–F–A-flat (natural 7th partial)–E (lowered to natural 11th partial). The actual intervals are tuned with partials on the retuned 1st and 2nd strings, and therefore are not in equal temperament.

The piece starts with the bass clarinet intonating a "very calm, contemplative, chant-like" (Whittall 2013b, 1) microtonal melody based on the pure intervals of that B-flat overtone series, reacting very freely to the guitar impulses (see Figure 15).

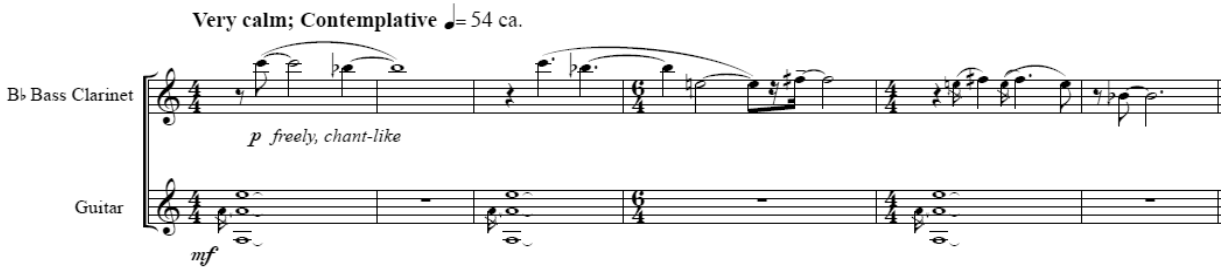


Figure 15: Beginning of *A fragile peace* (Whittall 2013b, 1).

The guitar takes its turn then, this time alone, to perform another beautifully inspired melody, which soon gets into a groove, while the bass clarinet continues its relaxed, "blissful" (Whittall 2013b, 1) singing above it (see Figure 16). At this point both instruments kind of work together, but they are still in different worlds of equal importance.

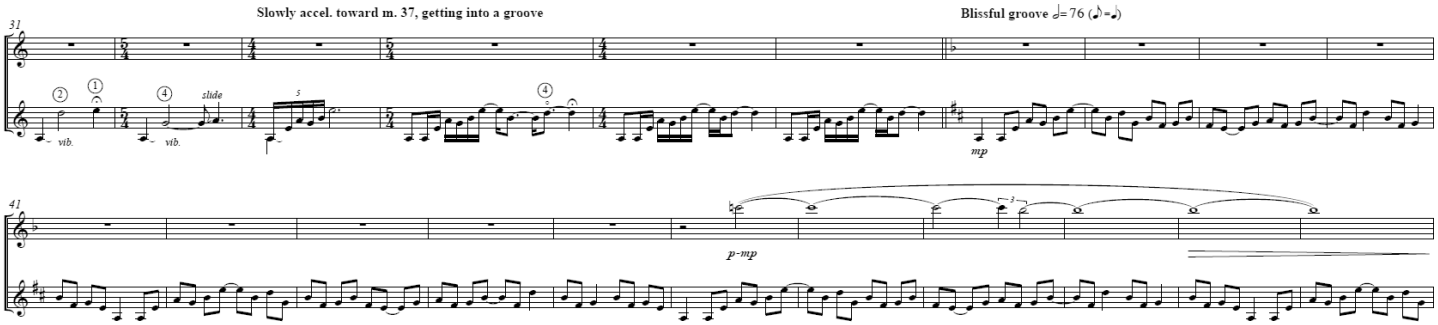


Figure 16: Bars 31–51 of *A fragile peace* (Whittall 2013b, 1).

While they gradually start coming into each other's space, the music grows into more bluesy, funky sections—all of them smoothly connected through metric modulations—including a Michael Jackson's *Billie Jean* quote with the guitar used as a percussion instrument (see Figure 17).

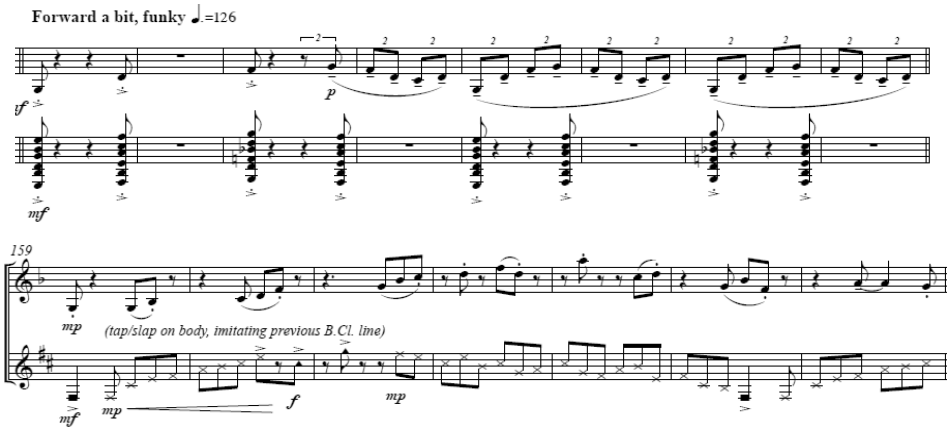


Figure 17: Bars 151–165 of *A fragile peace* (Whittall 2013b, 3).

A new field of minimalist pulses follows with the idea that the duo matches its sounds so closely that there is as little difference as possible between who is playing what. What starts as a quiet unison between the duo (see Figure 18) achieves an unusual harmonic progression through a gradual *crescendo* to finally show how awkward a major triad can sound when played obsessively loud on the guitar and against a 'disturbing' dissonance on the bass clarinet.

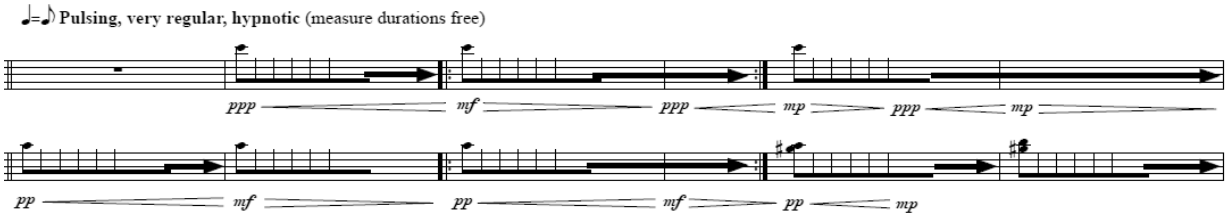


Figure 18: Bars 324–329 of *A fragile peace* (Whittall 2013b, 5).

The composer connects this situation with the microtonal world of the opening, as the guitarist changes to the second guitar, which, as mentioned, is retuned microtonally. A bowed B-flat on that second guitar gets reinforced when the bass clarinet joins gradually climbing up through the overtone series with a slow spectral multiphonic *glissando* based on that same pitch the guitarist is bowing. This creates the perfect space for the electronics, drone-like, to kick in, and opens the way for an improvised section, with only few suggestions from the composer about the musical gestures that could be used:

> "Do not use any melodic gestures! Single notes/sound effects only. Elements/noise other than those indicated here may be added freely, providing they do not distract from the B-flat overtone series. Section duration free, at least 5 min" (Whittall 2013b).

Although Whittall specifies a minimum duration of five minutes, this improvisation can really last much longer—almost a piece by itself. My experience with this section is that it asks for a steady but slow evolution for the electronic textures to develop and inspire the duo to start riffing around in its way to building the final climax. The instruction of not using melodic gestures is a very useful tip for an initial dialogue between the three (bass clarinet, guitar and electronics), but getting more melodic when the activity becomes more intense can also be a solution to reach a very powerful climatic point, where both instruments can really let loose.

A final coda closes the piece with a brief return to the opening melody, this time even calmer and with a long dissolution into silence, in which the composer appeals to the imagination of the performer for ending the piece, while the electronics also fade out (see Figure 19).

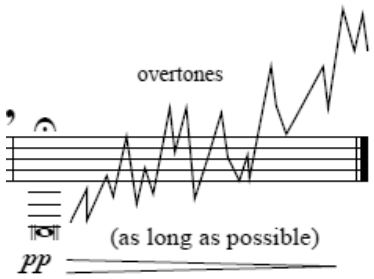


Figure 19: Last bar of *A fragile peace* (Whittall 2013b, 7).

Besides the live electronic textures, which were created by Juhani Nuorvala, a soundtrack of the electronic part (also realised by Nuorvala) is available from the composer on request. For its creation, Nuorvala used pre-recorded bass clarinet and guitar sounds, combined with other

samples that were later processed, but always based on untempered intervals derived from the B-flat overtone series. Nuorvala is known for employing a variety of alternative tuning systems in his music, so it is no surprise that Whittall asked him to collaborate in his piece by creating the electronics. His *Concertino* for bass clarinet and soundtrack (see chapter 6.3), and Whittall's *A fragile peace* are actually the only two pieces in the Finnish bass clarinet repertoire that make use of just intonation.[40]

7.3 Finnish music for bass clarinet and guitar (and other plucked instruments)

After all the experimentation regarding instrumental combinations, and the consequent expansion of the repertoire that has since taken place, the duo bass clarinet and guitar has remained almost unexplored. As mentioned, "the lure of an ensemble with few precedents, of a completely open field", was as powerful for composer Matthew Whittall to accept my commission as it was for me to propose it.

To my pleasant surprise, while talking with bass clarinettist Heikki Nikula about this commission, he commented that he was working on the same idea with a piece by **Markus Fagerudd** (b. 1961).[41] Curiously enough, we both had similar intentions almost at the same time without having previously talked about it. Also composed in 2013, this piece, called ***Bluesoresques***, was premiered few months earlier than Whittall's work, so we can consider it as the first Finnish piece for bass clarinet and guitar. And to continue with the coincidence, both Whittall and Fagerudd seem to associate the combination of bass clarinet and guitar with blues connotations, although Fagerudd takes it to a much more radical extent and uses that idea as the foundation for the whole piece. The title and the preference for the acoustic guitar and the sharper sound of its steel strings over the more mellow and sensitive sound of the nylon strings in the classical one are good indicators of what to expect, even before listening to the actual music. Supplemented with specific techniques for the guitar player such as slide guitar or singing and howling along playing, and instructions like "tap guitar body with palm and hum

[40] Both of them come with an audio file to facilitate the task of tunning the intervals based on the frequencies of the natural overtone series.

[41] If I previously regarded Josef Horák and Harry Sparnaay as two of the most prominent and influential bass clarinettists of all time, when it comes to Finland, we cannot forget mentioning Heikki Nikula (b. 1961) as the pioneer of Finnish bass clarinet. Besides being the bass clarinettist with the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra for more than 30 years, he has been a leading force in the Finnish contemporary music scene since the 1980s, and his collaboration with composers has led to a significant expansion of the Finnish bass clarinet repertoire.

something in low voice, ex. 'rhytm&blues'" (Fagerudd 2013, 1), the composer creates a very distinctive mood for each of the three movements, which can also work as independent miniatures from the others, all of them lasting between three and four minutes: *Bluesoresque I. In F (I dream of Bob Beamon)*, *Bluesoresque II. Slow & Howl*, *Bluesoresque III. G & Bb*. Besides some *glissandi*, Fagerudd does not ask for any extended technique on the bass clarinet, but even if it is not explicitly stated by the composer, the use of *vibrato* will for sure not harm the character of the music. The piece starts anyway with an invitation by the composer for the performers to allow room for personal freedom: "Let the music guide to personal dynamical solutions" (Fagerudd 2013, 1).

However, the guitar is not a stranger in the Finnish new music scene, thanks to several generations of brilliant guitarists who, up to nowadays, have been active commissioners of new works. "Nearly every significant Finnish composer has written either solo works or chamber music for the instrument", says Esko Virtanen (1991, 21) in his article *Tutte le corde. The Classical Guitar in Finnish Music* when reasoning the strong position the guitar holds in Finnish music. Thirty years later, Virtanen's statement about the affection of Finnish composers towards the guitar is not only still valid, but has even been reinforced.

At the moment of writing this thesis a new commission by guitarist Petri Kumela is on its way for composer **Paavo Korpijaakko** (b. 1977) to write a duo for bass clarinet and microtonal guitar. In addition, both Heikki Nikula and myself are also working on two new pieces for bass clarinet and guitar with composers **Timo Hietala** (b. 1960) and **Olli Koskelin** (b. 1955), respectively.

Besides the duos, we can also find the partnership of the bass clarinet and the guitar as members of larger ensembles:

While still a student at the Sibelius Academy, **Sauli Zinovjev** (b. 1988) wrote his trio ***Runo Runosta*** (a poem of a poem) for soprano, bass clarinet and guitar in 2012. A *Quasi Improvisando* beginning and a *Fragile* ending frame less than three minutes of colouristic textures in which the composer compresses a vast range of emotions, the music becoming more rhythmical, and at points anxious, even aggressive, but also calm and relaxed. In this piece, Zinovjev offers challenges for all the three voices, without leaving behind any of them as a mere accompaniment.

As a direct consequence of the legacy left by the *Cluster Ensemble*—a chamber group with an atypical instrumental line-up founded in 1978 by Mikael Helasvuo (flute), Pekka Savijoki, (saxophone), Jukka Savijoki (guitar) and Timothy Ferchen (percussion)[42]—Kirmo Lintinen (b. 1967) wrote ***Faabeli*** (1996) and ***Abrakadabra*** (2002), both for flute, bass clarinet, guitar and percussion.

Guitarist–composer of Spanish origin **Juan Antonio Muro** (b. 1945) has obviously written idiomatic music for his own instrument, including his ***Au-dessus des nuages*** (above the clouds), for flute, oboe, bass clarinet and guitar (2010). He is also an accomplished painter, and the piece shares the name with a painting that he created at the same time of composing it, although Muro (2010a) insists that "both works are independent of each other". The guitar has a double role of supporting the pointillistic textures created by the three woodwinds while also becoming one of them in the intricate counterpoint that Muro presents in this three-movement work. At the moment of writing this thesis, he is working on a similar piece for piccolo, cor anglais, bass clarinet and guitar, which will be premiered in 2023.

7.3.1 With kantele

By analogy with the guitar, another plucked string instrument (although there are other playing techniques) is the Finnish kantele. Belonging to the zither family, it has a strong mythological background and is considered Finland's national instrument. Although the kantele is primarily perceived as a folk instrument, it has also drawn the attention of the contemporary music field. That has mainly happened with the modern concert kantele, more advanced in terms of sound projection than smaller and simpler folk variants of the instrument, and able to "cope with any notes, thanks to its lever mechanism" (Djupsjöbacka 2019).

Romanian-born composer **Adina Dumitrescu** (b. 1964), who has felt attracted by this instrument since she moved to Finland in 2003, wrote a duo for bass clarinet and kantele in a very particular style in 2007. In ***Pas de deux'n keskustelu matkalla kotiin***, both instruments are apparently quite distant from each other. The first image that it personally brings to mind is a very distorted version of a recitative in a Mozart-opera-like fashion. While the bass clarinet

[42] *Linea d'ombra*, the first work that Magnus Lindberg wrote in 1981 after graduating from the Sibelius Academy, was written for them, although the version with clarinet has eventually become more often performed than the original one with saxophone.

displays a virtuosic and complex line, the kantele limits itself to a progression of elegant chords with surprisingly tonal implications. All that becomes much more logical after paying close attention to the title, which translates from Finnish as 'conversation on the way home', with the idea of portraying, as Dumitrescu (2021) says, "a conversation on usual daily things". Even though the material of both instruments changes from the middle of the piece on, the bass clarinet always keeps the vociferous character that the composer gave it from the beginning, full of irregular patterns, which will not give an easy time to the performer and, apparently, not to its duo partner either. According to the theatrical instructions, the bass clarinettist has to change the position on stage gradually until loosing contact with the kantele player, who, ready to pluck the strings, gives up several times and finally leaves the stage furiously, seeing how determined the other interlocutor is on his or her speech. Unaware of the situation, the bass clarinettist should continue, *stringendo poco a poco*, to realise only one page later that he or she is 'speaking' alone, leaving immediately after that and running to the backstage, which brings the piece to the end.

7.4 Other Finnish duos with bass clarinet

7.4.1 With strings

Although there are not many precedents of established duos, the combination of the bass clarinet with other string instruments is relatively frequent, the marriage of the lower voices being especially appealing. The ensemble of (bass) clarinet and cello was introduced into Finnish contemporary music in the late 1980s thanks to the partnership between two contemporary music icons, Kari Kriikku and Anssi Karttunen, as members of the *Toimii Ensemble* (see chapter 6.3). As Karttunen (n.d.) states on his website: "You can hear Toimii every time any of its members is on stage. Toimii never leaves its members. Toimii is alive."

On the other hand, Kriikku (2007, 5), in the booklet notes of their CD *A Due*, illuminates fairly well on the origin of their idea of commissioning, premiering and recording an entire programme of new music for a duo combination for which they were not aware of any original repertoire:

> "The Warsaw Autumn festival was getting ready to welcome the Toimii Ensemble from Finland, but we were perhaps not quite what they were expecting. Only a cellist, a clarinettist and a sound

> engineer? In their baggage they had a pile of new Finnish works for clarinet and cello, the ink barely dry. This had been preceded by a process of asking a dozen Finnish composers to write a duo for clarinet and cello. Many of them jumped at the opportunity. One immediately exclaimed that he wanted nothing to do with such a concept, and never did write us anything."

From those composers who jumped in, three (Kaija Saariaho, Tapani Länsiö and Kimmo Hakola) decided to picture the bass instead of the clarinet, and one (Erik Bergman) combined both instruments.

When thinking about the music of **Kaija Saariaho** (b. 1952), sound colour often emerges as one of its more representative parameters. "Kaija Saariaho is a painter of colourful and richly sonorous musical landscapes, and her output contains several works that gain a strong visual dimension through their titles", says Kimmo Korhonen (2001, 91). To 'paint' the 'landscape' of her bass clarinet and cello duo ***Oi Kuu*** (1990), freely translated as 'for a moon', Saariaho puts into play different bow techniques in the cello, such as *sul ponticello, sul tasto*, transitions between them or increasing the bow pressure, and asks for a breath tone to move gradually from or towards normal sound in the bass clarinet. In addition, she combines all that with a rich selection of multiple sounds for both instruments. For the bass clarinet, although they work well, the multiphonics that Saariaho has chosen require a good control from the performer in order to keep the *sostenuto e dolce* character, as well as to move smoothly from one gesture to the next, very often framed by the indications *crescendo da niente* and *diminuendo al niente*. With such tools, the composer creates a floating, almost mystical soundscape in which the piece behaves as if frozen, whilst not excluding more agitated moments. However, the overall calm and contemplative atmosphere remains throughout the piece, thanks to a balanced coexistence between the complex sonorities she demands from both instruments.

Tapani Länsiö (b. 1953) wrote ***A Due*** a year later, in 1991, to be included in the Finnish premiere of all works at the *Helsinki Biennale* that year. "A Due for bass clarinet and cello is a rhapsody of small, static situations. The instruments do not really want to meet but cannot avoid it", writes the composer (Häyrinen 2007, 4). Certainly, Länsiö designed two lines that leave space for each other, almost two soliloquies with two differentiated personalities: a more active cello that responds to the different moods the composer proposes, and an impassive bass clarinet which only for a while seems to react and get a bit closer to its partner. It is not the relation one

would initially expect from a duo between two melodic instruments; nevertheless, it keeps the tension of the piece very effectively for the four minutes that it lasts.

1991 was also when **Kimmo Hakola** (b. 1958) completed ***Capriole***, but the performers admit that they never had time to learn it for the *Helsinki Biennale* recital (Karttunen 2007, 6), so the piece had to wait few months to be premiered at the *Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival* that same year.

Capriole is constructed around the coexistence of two musical languages—two worlds which seem to be very far apart: the agitated modernism of the contemporary idiom, and the serene exoticism of Mongolian folk music. What the composer presents to the listener is an intensely heterophonic work in which the interaction between the two instruments ranges from strict unison sequences to passages where what could be described as a written-out improvisation or cadenza for one is supported by accompaniment from the other. Once the contemporary language has been explored in depth for almost half of the piece, a triangle stroke by the bass clarinettist gives the listener the key to enter a new world of sound: the Mongolian chant. This becomes even more symbolic with the following six chords, in which the composer quotes the opening of Beethoven's Piano *Sonata No. 26, Les adieux* (the farewell). Besides departing from the language of the first section, it can also be understood as a personal farewell, leaving behind the strictures of the young man that he was before and welcoming a new composer: "Ever since he [Hakola] grafted a lengthy extract of Mongolian folk music onto the modernist texture of *Capriole* […], he has paid no further attention to musical boundaries, be they stylistic or geographical", writes Kimmo Korhonen (2005, 5). After this breathtaking exercise of relaxed beauty—nostalgic, intensively expressive[43]—the piece ends with a sudden return to the opening material, quick and short, and with a laughter-like gesture in the bass clarinet that leaves on the air a strong sense of irony.

Another piece that was included in the March recital of 1991 *Helsinki Biennale* was *Plus II*, for clarinet and cello, by **Jukka Tiensuu** (b. 1948). It belongs to a set of pieces, all of them sharing the same material, that can be played with different combinations of instruments: *Plus I* (clarinet and accordion), *Plus II* (clarinet and cello), *Plus III* (cello and accordion), *Plus IV* (clarinet,

[43] It is marked in the score "So beautiful it is that one can faint" (Hakola 1991, 7), which seems to make reference to a Mongolian folk song by M. Dobčin, although the material the composer is using in *Capriole* is pure Hakola, without a straight quotation from an actual song.

cello and accordion) and *Plus V* (accordion and string orchestra). In 1997, the composer made a version for bass clarinet and cello, ***Plus IIb***, for which he kept the same fingerings on the bass clarinet than on the clarinet in all the other versions and brought the cello part an octave lower to maintain the relation between both instruments, very often in unison. Only a few pitches in the cello (bars 51, 54 and 88) could not be taken down an octave as they would be too low, but Tiensuu found a musical solution for each of them transforming the whole passage around instead of just changing the pitch in question. The first section of the piece is a 'game' of imitation where one of the players proposes a motive to which the other should react as quickly as possible, according to a full page of instructions that accompany the score. This dynamic opening, in which the performers should try to surprise each other, is connected smoothly by the composer with a no less intense second half, where both instruments keep running after each other, but this time in perfect synchrony.

Besides all the repertoire for Kriikku and Karttunen I just mentioned, with all the pieces written around the same time and for the same project, ten years later we find another duo for bass clarinet and cello: ***Crest, trough and scrolling nodes*** (2002), by **Kimmo Kuitunen** (b. 1968). It is the largest piece of them all with more than fifteen minutes of duration, and it goes in three movements, plus an introduction, although the music flows from one to another without interruption.

In the *Intro*, the composer presents the duo "as if tunning" (Kuitunen 2002, 1) with two long notes that get interrupted by different means, such as quarter tones up and down in the bass clarinet and different bow strokes and articulations in the cello, as if the musicians were trying out. Soon, the original soft dynamics grow to set the tone of what the first movement, *Crest*, will be: a very lively dialogue between both instruments, sometimes in rhythmic unison, and sometimes continuing the same musical line, which keeps jumping from one stave to the other.

The second movement, *Trough*, has a clear alternance between two opposite characters. On one hand, we find one of a quieter, calmer nature (crotchet equalling 48), where the composer creates a mysterious, kind of metallic sound with long multiphonics on natural harmonics in the cello, over which a high bass clarinet voice (up to a C-sharp in the fifth octave) presents more melodic motives. On the other hand, Kuitunen takes the bass clarinet down to the lowest octaves and, at double speed (crotchet equalling 96) and with *ff* as the dominant dynamic, showcases a

much more frantic temperament. Even though the alternance between these two characters keeps going for seven times, it never gives the impression of repetition.

In the third movement, *Scrolling nodes*, the composer takes us back to the colourful 'macro-instrument' he was employing at the beginning, full of complex rhythms and changes of time signature,[44] and with both instruments sharing equal responsibilities in unfolding the musical discourse, but, again, without any feeling of reusing any previous material.

7.4.2 With voice

Contrary to what seems to be the norm when pairing bass clarinet and voice, the first Finnish composers who wrote duos for this combination opted for a tenor voice, instead of the much more common combination with soprano.

Mikko Kervinen (b. 1962) found the inspiration back in the Renaissance. In his ***John Dowland-transcrptions*** (1994), the concept of transcription should not be interpreted in the conventional way that would be commonly used in customary music language, but with a more open attitude. As Kervinen (2022) states, they are "free translations to another media by another mediator". Although the composer mainly retains the original melodies of three of Dowland's most popular songs with slight alterations, the bass clarinet material comes only from his own associations and imagination about how that fascinating combination of solo song and lute accompaniment could be transferred 400 years later into his own musical language and with the bass clarinet taking the role of the accompanying lute through a variety of effects and techniques:

- In the first song, *I saw my Lady weep* (verses 1 and 2), we can find a subtle use of both overblown and underblown multiphonics, combined also with a *bisbigliando* effect.
- From the second one, *Come again, sweet love doth now invite* (verses 1 to 4), I would highlight the grace-note motives with fast repetitions of the last pitch, sometimes left *ad libitum* until the voice finishes a certain phrase.
- In the third movement, *Sweet stay awhile* (verses 1 and 2), although we can find similar effects to the ones described in the two previous songs, it is remarkable the use of a very expressive atonal line that is already presented in the solo bass clarinet introduction and that

[44] In the 259 bars of the piece, we can find 189 changes of time signature.

takes a more accompanying role when the voice part starts, but for which the composer always finds some moments to bring it back to the forefront.

The beauty and expressiveness of the songs remains but acquires a totally new dimension after going through Kervinen's vision of them. This forces the listener to use different ears, as in my opinion it should be considered a totally independent piece under a highly original idea, and not just a transcription. Although it was originally premiered by a tenor, Kervinen (2022) indicates that "any voice of any range can perform the piece".

The second example of music for tenor and bass clarinet are the ***Children Songs*** by **Lotta Wennäkoski** (b. 1970), composed between 2001 and 2008. As Wennäkoski (2021) acknowledges, they are quite a special case among her compositions, especially because of the original and sympathetic way in which they were born. All of them, together with many others (including the clarinet), were written for her own children's birthdays, with the composer herself singing and her husband Heikki Nikula playing the bass clarinet. Besides in those family gatherings, they were officially premiered in a children's day happening during *Tampere Biennale 2008*. That same year, Wennäkoski also turned a couple of them into orchestral songs for her cycle of six children's songs for tenor and orchestra *Ämpärilumikki* (bucket Snow White).

The lyrics of the songs are children's poems by Finnish poets and traditional folk songs: *Tule nukku naapurista* (2001, folk trad.), *Matti tatti tarkkasilmä* (2002, folk trad.), *Kuka pilvellä ratsastaa* (2005, text: Hannele Huovi), *Avaa A* (2006, text: Hannele Huovi), *Vein varsalle lipää* (2006, text: Aale Tynni), and *Elsan viisut* (2008, text: Tittamari Marttinen).

Despite being just short children's songs, the musical material is well elaborated, and the bass clarinet part goes far beyond mere accompaniment. On the contrary, it plays a substantial part in each of the songs.

Unlike the previous two pieces, **Riikka Talvitie** (b. 1970) wrote her ***Seireenietydi*** (etude of sirens) in 2005 for soprano and bass clarinet, but also with the aid of live electronics (2005). Nevertheless, the electronics are employed by the composer only to extend the scope of the soprano voice, while the bass clarinet part remains strictly acoustic throughout. It is inspired by

The Silence of the Sirens, a short story by Franz Kafka based on Ulysses' journey in which he encounters the sirens.

The fact that the electronics are designed only to interact with the soprano part already anticipates the intention of the composer in setting the two members of her duo at different, contrasting levels. And that gets confirmed from the beginning of the piece, where the long notes of the bass clarinet support a melismatic melody of the soprano, without words and just with few phonemes, which, after being looped several times by the electronics in a canon-like fashion, ends up as a soprano trio. After this opening, the soprano starts telling the story. Reverb, delays, granular synthesis, frequency shifts, whispering and a distorting harmonise effect, together with the electronic looping of the beginning, give the singer an otherworldly dimension, which could perfectly evoke the deadly siren songs described in the Homeric myth. Although the bass clarinet part becomes more active, at some points even as much as its partner, it is more often used as a subordinated tool to enhance what the soprano is doing—e.g. joining the harmonised chords or the looped parts of all the 'virtual sopranos' as another voice, contributing to the soundscape with soft and delicate multiphonics when the soprano is whispering or with a very sonorous one when the piece is reaching its climax, serving as a natural resonance of the material sung by the soprano, playing a quick succession of indeterminate pitches to emphasise the granular synthesis taken place in the material of the soprano, or connecting contrasting sections with a solo and more virtuosic passage.

7.4.3 With piano

One of the main ideas of my second doctoral concert, with which this chapter is directly related, was to present the bass clarinet in unusual duos. For that reason, I decided not to include a piece with piano, which is likely the first image to come to mind when thinking of almost any duo combination, owing to its considerable historical baggage. However, it would be unfair to forget bass clarinet and piano duos in this thesis. Among the countless pieces for bass clarinet and piano that have been written, Finland also counts for a good number of examples. Unsurprisingly, this is the longest section of the whole thesis with 13 different pieces, and as in the general repertoire, in Finland, this combination also inspired some of the earliest attempts to use the bass clarinet outside the orchestra.

The very first example in the Finnish repertoire is ***Mesikämmen*** (a bear), from 1940, written by multi-talented musician **Matti Rajula** (1905–1944). Among other occupations, Rajula worked as a saxophonist in a jazz and light music orchestra in Berlin and was the principal clarinettist of the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra. He also had an extensive career as a soloist on both instruments, having performed, for instance, the Finnish premiere of Carl Nielsen's *Clarinet Concerto*. As a composer, he was often inspired by the Finnish folk tradition, with an output consisting mainly of small works of a light character, such as *Mesikämmen*. It is a simple piece that starts with a slow introduction, followed by a small solo cadenza for the bass clarinet and a faster final section, polka-like, that very rarely moves away from a very basic tonic-dominant alternation in its harmonic structure.

We would need to wait almost twenty years for the next piece for bass clarinet and piano: ***Pilvinen Päivä*** (a cloudy day), written in 1959 by **Väinö Hannikainen** (1900–1960) as part of his *Spring Suite* (*Kevät-Sarja*, in its original Finnish title), which includes several small pieces for a wind instrument and piano. Born into a family with a strong musical tradition,[45] Hannikainen's music can still be considered as in a late romantic style. His piece for bass clarinet and piano, although more elaborated than Rajula's, is still quite a simple composition: an *Andantino* in which a singing melody on the bass clarinet is accompanied by the piano.

Again, a further nineteen years would pass until the next piece for bass clarinet and piano, which, in this case, was an arrangement of a previous work. ***Epitaph No.2d***, by **Leif Segerstam** (b. 1944) is the fourth version of the piece that the composer made for bass clarinet in 1978, one year after the original *Epitaph No.2* for violin, *Epitaph No.2b* for cello, and *Epitaph No.2c* for alto saxophone.

Besides his well-known facet as a conductor, and his more hidden ones as a violinist and pianist, Leif Segerstam is also a prolific composer, with an enormously large output that includes more than 300 symphonies. Since the 1970s, he has developed a personal style of composing that he calls 'free-pulsative'. It is a kind of controlled aleatoricism in which the composer defines the pitches but not exactly the duration of the notes.

[45] One of his older brothers, Ilmari, is often regarded as a more prominent composer.

> "'Free-pulsative' refers to a manner of writing that leaves the synchronization between individual musicians or groups of musicians partly indeterminate. This results in the slowly undulating freedom of rhythm that characterizes his work" (Korhonen 2003, 136).

That is exactly what happens in *Epitaph No.2d*. Although there is a tempo marking of crochet equalling 88 and the rhythms in the bass clarinet part are often written out, there is never the perception of a clear pulsation. The omission of bar lines and time signature, and the use of blank spaces in the piano stave, generally following long chords fermatas with the indication of l.v. (let vibrate) allows the bass clarinet line to flow, enigmatically, over those long chords and repeated notes in the piano, as waves of sound that come and go at different pace. It is up to the performers what to make out of these tools that the composer gives and how to combine both parts. In a final note at the end of the score, Segerstam (1977, 4) emphasises this concept of freedom:

> "Please choose the attribute functions of this musical language yourself, make it personal: use your own tempi, own dynamics, own colorings, own rubati, own fantasies… but take my message: This piece could be played at a funeral…!"

With the exception of Nils-Eric Ringbom's (1907–1988) wind sextet from 1951, which will be mentioned later in this chapter, and Erik Bergman's (1911–2006) octet *Concertino da Camera* from 1961, these pieces for bass clarinet and piano are all the music for the instrument that had been written in Finland until then.[46] Soon, during the next few years, we will find the first solo pieces and other chamber music combinations.

The early 1980s will also see a further expansion of the repertoire for bass clarinet and piano with two important pieces, not only for their artistic value, but also in terms of the historical context, as the dedicatees of the pieces were Josef Horák and Harry Sparnaay, respectively.

In my comparison of the dyad Horák-Sparnaay, I might have given the impression of Horák as being more conservative or traditional, while Sparnaay was always willing to experiment new things. ***Szene am...*** for bass clarinet and piano—the only piece written for Josef Horák from the whole Finnish repertoire—will definitely prove that preconception wrong. **Herman**

[46] Although Erik Bergman included the bass clarinet in his *Concertino da Camera*, together with flute, clarinet, percussion, piano, violin, viola and cello, this thesis has focused only on smaller ensembles.

Rechberger (1947–2022) composed this duo in 1981 as a pure exercise of experimentalism, where both parts are full of instructions on how to interpret the musical text and the graphic notation he is also using.[47]

Both musicians need quite a few extra 'accessories' to their own instruments. The pianist is asked for two plectrums, two teaspoons, two felt mallets, two wooden mallets, a soft brush and a ruler. But besides these, which are applied directly over the strings, the tuning screws and other elements of the piano structure, the composer also requires the pianist to use a set of small bells and the head joint of a tenor recorder, as well as his or her own voice. On the other hand, the bass clarinettist needs a clarinet mouthpiece and an e-flat clarinet.

The piece starts and ends with the pianist strumming the lowest strings of the piano with the palm of the hand. In between these two gestures and the intriguing sound they create, both instruments go through different atmospheres and situations, where the exploration of colour and timbre through the use of several extended playing techniques seems to be the driving force for the composer. Rather free in rhythm and without any perception of a recognisable pulsation, both instruments have a very particular relationship in which they react to each other impulses with exceptional sensitivity but without ever actually being together.

The rhythmical contrast is brought by several dance-like episodes reminding of a more popular tradition on one hand, and evoking archaic flavours on the other, but which Rechberger presents under quite bizarre conditions. Inserting what Rechberger (1981, 5) defines as "wild and uncontrolled multiphonics in the highest register" of the bass clarinet in between the motives of a *dolce* passage, closing a *come-una-danza* gracious melody with a sudden exaggeratedly jazzy episode marked in the score as *grottesco*, or assigning a passage to the e-flat clarinet to follow with a free improvisation with that instrument—the only moment it is used in the whole piece—are just some examples of how the composer makes those elements fit into his own sound world.

More than 25 years later, in 2007, Rechberger wrote another duo for bass clarinet and piano: ***Cranes in company***. It is a miniature composed for Henri Bok's silver jubilee as part of a

[47] As in his quartet for three clarinets, bass clarinet and tape, *Sirba* (see chapter 6.3), non-German speakers will need a good translator to interpret Rechberger's indications, while the German-speaking players will require only a good dose of fantasy and imagination.

concert of one-minute pieces by composers who had worked with Bok throughout his career. The subtitle, *a moment in the Siikalahti bird reservation*, referring to this lake area in south-eastern Finland known for its exceptionally large and diverse array of bird species, already hints at the idea on which the piece is based. Although I do not think Rechberger was trying to portray any particular bird in the way Messiaen carefully did and reported in some of his music, the inspiration from the feathered creatures, with mostly fast music, and an abundant use of trills, tremolos and grace notes of many different kinds, is clearly there.

Piping Down the Walleys Wild op. 26 (1984) by **Jouni Kaipainen** (1956–2015) is the only Finnish piece written for Harry Sparnaay, although the composer himself admits that, after the premiere, it has been Heikki Nikula who has played it more often and who has made the greatest contribution to uncover the true essence of the piece (Kaipainen 1994). It is inspired by the *Introduction* of William Blake's collection of poems *Songs of Innocence*, from where it also takes the title, and which Kaipainen (1994) describes as "delightfully naïve" and "with unparalleled pastoral nuances". Even though the composer himself uses those terms in his own notes, I would probably use quite different words—if asked to describe the character of the music—such as intense and anxious, rather than pastoral and naïve. However, the piece unfolds in several sections, all of them very skilfully connected, thus allowing for the possibility to experience many different moods throughout the almost fifteen minutes that it lasts.

An initial introduction by the bass clarinet alone, which the piano joins later with a series of insistent chords, gives way to the first section, *Allegretto*, with trills and rapid figurations divided up among both parts in a more playful character. After that, a new section begins with the same piano sequence that led to the previous one after the introduction, but with the opposite motion this time, *rallentando*, towards the new *Cantabile*, which features longer lines in the bass clarinet over a much more transparent accompanying piano part. After a considerable thickening of the texture and the rhythmical activity, the bass clarinet stays alone, *poco a poco accelerando* through trills and a fast series of semiquaver triplets, which the piano takes over to enter a new episode: *Presto*. The composer maintains the *cantabile* long lines in the bass clarinet, but they acquire now a totally different meaning over the new motoric accompaniment of the piano. When it suddenly stops, the singing bass clarinet remains to prepare the way for a more mysterious *Adagio*, with *frullato* and multiphonics in the bass clarinet, and a constant use of the pedal in the piano. The last transition evolves from this delicate and rhythmically freer atmosphere to an agitated final section that recalls the playful mode of the first one. Even though

both outer *Allegretto* sections have an identical rhythmic structure for the first bars, this final one is much more compact and grows more quickly and abruptly towards the climactic point, *molto f*, to finally relax and finish the piece with the same large intervals that the bass clarinet used in the opening.

All these sections share a virtuosic and, at the same time, very expressive writing for the bass clarinet that uses a range of over four octaves, and where very big leaps are one of its more recurrent elements. Even if a good deal of time has passed since this piece was written, it remains, in my opinion, the most substantial Finnish work for bass clarinet and piano, and one of the most relevant within the whole bass clarinet repertoire in Finland.

The next piece for bass clarinet and piano is ***Ingrepp I*** by **Markus Fagerudd** (b. 1961), from 1990. His friendship with Heikki Nikula and the fact that the improvisation ensemble *Free Okapi* was also established in 1990, with both Fagerudd and Nikula as founding members, probably played a role in the composer's choice of the bass clarinet for his *opus* 1, as well as in the improvisatory character he brought to the piece.

This improvisational aspect is mainly explored in a final section for the bass clarinet alone, first written out, and later with an explicitly free part, *ad libitum expressivo*, where the bass clarinet moves around the *altissimo* register with just some pitches as a guide, connected by a wavy line, trill-like, as if showing the approximate direction the bass clarinettist should take in his or her improvisation. After that, the last bars of trills in the lowest register of the piano, and spectral multiphonic *glissandi* and trills in the bass clarinet, contribute to that indeterminacy in the sound. In fact, these multiphonics are recurrent tools throughout the whole bass clarinet part used by the composer, who also gives them different characters: "gentle like a bird", "whale" or "moaning" (Fagerudd 1996, 9, 12).

A year later, in 1991, but with a totally different style, **Olli Koskelin** (b. 1955) wrote ***Echos colorés***, one of his first works with a visible influence of spectral music, and which, as Koskelin (2021) admits, also "'flirts' with aleatoricism and the idea of chance music".

With apparently simple elements, but very effectively combined, the composer creates a static and meditative atmosphere of rich and colourful timbres that goes on for almost ten minutes, in which "there is no beginning, middle and final parts, no catharsis, no turns" (Koskelin 2021).

While the bass clarinettist moves through a progression of soft multiphonics in slow tempo, the pianist plays the lowest two keys with the left hand and slides the piano strings with the right one to create different overtones, as the fingers should never be in the same part of the strings.

In the review of Koskelin's second composer portrait concert, where *Echos colorés* was premiered, the critic described the piece as "a lullaby from mother earth" with "an extraordinarily calming effect" that made his "mind fall into a deep sleep" (Lampila 1991).

In 1993,[48] **Veli-Matti Puumala** (b. 1965), current Professor of Composition at the Sibelius Academy, approached the concept of bass clarinet and piano from quite a different angle than his predecessors by employing electronic means in his piece ***Basfortel***, for bass clarinet, piano and live electronics. In his own notes, the composer explains the main ideas behind his decision:

> "Basfortel is scored for two players but is in fact a trio. In addition to the grand piano the pianist plays a Midi keyboard placed over the piano keys. I wanted to write a piece that expands the piano-clarinet duo setup with electronics, either so that the material of the Midi keyboard comes close to the sound of some imaginary keyboard instrument, in which case it contributes to the music-making with its own independent timbre, or so that the material is so highly processed that it becomes some strange, unknown instrument or source of sound. All the Midi keyboard material is taken from the bass clarinet and piano sounds processed in different ways in the spirit of musique concrète" (Puumala 1995).

Even though, as the composer states, the materials of the Midi keyboard derive from the bass clarinet and piano sounds, they are no longer recognisable. Together with the effects of the live electronics, such as long reverbs and different transpositions (from microtonal to a diminished fifth), and several samples inserted along the piece, they create a very particular sound world not related to anything one would probably expect from a bass clarinet and piano duo, thus serving very well what seemed to be the purpose of the composer: a strange atmosphere but, at the same time, a very attractive one.

Unlike in other pieces, in *Basfortel* none of the instruments has a clearly soloistic or accompanying role, even if there are parts alone for the 'three' instruments. They all contribute

[48] Revised in 1995.

with equal importance to a complex whole, which still seems to be a very recognisable feature of Puumala's music throughout his entire output.

Multi-faceted composer **Eero Hämeenniemi** (b. 1951) has written quite a lot of music for bass clarinet. With the exception of the concerto *The snake in the rope* (2000), everything has been composed within the frame of *Nada*, an ensemble he founded in 1994 with the idea of fusing "elements of modern jazz, contemporary chamber music and world music into a coherent, exciting and unique sound" (Hämeenniemi 1999, 3), for which he composes and in which he plays the piano together with Heikki Nikula (bass clarinet), Sampo Lassila (double bass), Pentti Lahti (saxophones) and Markus Ketola (drums).

One of those pieces he composed for *Nada* in 1995 was titled ***Duaali*** (dual), as if emphasising that it is made out of two equal elements—bass clarinet and piano—or even the 'dual' responsibility shared between composer and performers to give a final shape to the piece, where improvisation is a central element. The basic structure is a theme followed by two improvised solos, first for the bass clarinet and then for the piano, with a couple of written out phrases at the end, returning to the original theme. Although the composer provides some indications for the beginning and the 'exit' of both solos, the final result will depend, to a large extent, on the performers' improvisation skills.

As for Hämeenniemi, jazz idiom is an important part of the musical language of **Kirmo Lintinen** (b. 1967), although this aspect does not stand out as a very obvious feature in his duo for bass clarinet and piano ***Oikku*** (caprice), from 1997. As a long-time pianist and conductor of the UMO Jazz Orchestra in Helsinki, Lintinen's name is strongly linked with the jazz scene, and he actually had already developed a brilliant career as a jazz musician before emerging as a composer of concert music. However, as Lotta Wennäkoski (2003, 5) points out in her liner notes for Heikki Nikula's recording of the piece, "Lintinen began his career in concert music by writing material strictly anchored in twelve-tone technique, and only since *Oikku* he has moved on to freer techniques".

With a great sense for characterisation, barely four minutes of music are more than enough time for Lintinen to explore the different faces of the bass clarinet. The capricious character, as one would expect from the title, is obviously there, more precisely in the outer sections of the piece, with a restless piano part that rarely misses an eight note in the 6/8 time signature in which it is

written. On the top, the bass clarinet keeps leaping with a main theme where the octave interval is a very recognisable one. Both of these outer sections present a *stretto* episode towards the end to prepare what will come next: a central singing part in the first case, and an explosive *crescendo* to close the piece, taking the bass clarinet from the first to the fifth octave of its register, in the second. To complete the A-B-A structure of *Oikku*, the brief contrasting middle section, marked *cantabile*, provides the pianist with more melodic material to fill the space left by the bass clarinettist, as if answering, or rather, completing the long *legato* lines initiated by its duo partner.

In 2005, **Petri Judin** (b. 1969) wrote ***Rotation IV*** to enter the Henri Selmer composition competition of the World Bass Clarinet Convention that took place that year in Rotterdam. While it was not awarded the prize, it turned out to be a very fine piece for bass clarinet and piano, the atmosphere of which recalls in many moments that created by Alban Berg (1885–1935) in his *Four Pieces* op. 5 (1913). The expressivity of its atonal language and the devotion to timbre are some remarkable features in both pieces. Judin also sets that down from the beginning: while the piano creates a tranquil atmosphere with palm clusters on free strings, *pizzicatos*, damped strings and some chords pressed down silently to let them resonate by sympathetic vibrations—as Berg also does at the end of his *Four Pieces*—the bass clarinet line develops peacefully from single pitches—first only airy tones, *soffio*—to longer lines through expressive romantic gestures. Although *Rotation IV* unfolds in a single movement, the composer is still able to keep the material in constant movement by inserting different very compact sections, conveying a variety of expressions: from the lyricism of the opening to the rhythmic explosion of the final *Allegro molto e' ritmico – Presto*. In between, we can find several intermediate chapters, such as a more determinate *Allegro molto moderato*, a moving *Poco più vivo*, and a return to the tender character of the opening, *Tempo molto andante.*

The last work in this chapter of music for bass clarinet and piano is the ***Sonata*** op. 147 by **Paavo Heininen** (1938–2022), from 2019. When reading about Heininen, the anecdote of his first symphony (1958) that could not be premiered in its entirety for being too difficult for the orchestra at that time is quite often mentioned. Since then, and as a diehard modernist, the label of 'difficult' composer has been closely associated with him.[49] Although not always justifiably,

[49] "'The myth of an *enfant terrible* of Finnish contemporary music took wing immediately, and stayed aloft a long time', wrote Jouko Linjama of the event" (Kaipainen, 1986, 32).

60 years after that shocking premiere, the attribute of ‘complex’ still fits his *Sonata* for bass clarinet and piano quite well.

With this piece, one should get rid of nearly all the implications that have been strongly associated with the term sonata through the history of music. To the contrary, it is a puzzling piece in a single movement, in which many different sections and changes of tempo and character follow each other with a seamless connection. With a duration of about half an hour, it is definitely a tough nut to crack, for both performers and audiences.

Very rich in details, and full of interesting textural changes, Heininen creates an intricate network of rhythms, not so much for the individual players alone, but for the ensemble playing. One of the most recurrent elements throughout is the semitone interval, on which the piece seems to be constructed, with many different variations—sometimes even spanning several octaves. While it is great to see a piece that takes full advantage of the bass clarinet compass, Heininen’s unabashed use of the highest register at times results in not very idiomatically written passages for the instrument.

7.4.4 With accordion

The accordion being an instrument that has reached such a respected status within the Finnish music culture, it would be a surprise not to find any piece written for bass clarinet and accordion by a Finnish composer.

Tauno Marttinen (1912–2008) was one of the first Finnish composers to use the bass clarinet outside the orchestra in the 1980s. He was the first to write music for solo bass clarinet, for bass clarinet and percussion (marimba), and also for bass clarinet and accordion. In fact, the clarinet and the bass clarinet were instruments that particularly captivated his attention, and we can find quite many clarinet and bass clarinet works throughout his very large output.

After starting as a musician in the field of light music—with some early compositions in a late romantic style—followed by a dodecaphonic period in the 1950s, he decided to move away from the centre of the Finnish musical life in Helsinki to Hämeenlinna. He soon developed a more personal idiom, in which trusting his own instinct and intuition would become much more

important than following other stylistic currents or 'isms', which earned him the nickname of 'the shaman of Hämeenlinna'.[50]

Marttinen once wrote that "music is also an exercise in faith—a faith which has neither name nor form" (Anderson 2008). His ***October*** for bass clarinet and accordion op. 227 (1983) is a good example of this intuitive approach to composition, in which sometimes there is an apparent lack of form or structure. It is a single-movement piece divided in many different sections, each of them with a new indication of tempo or character. That is actually a feature shared by all of Marttinen's pieces discussed in this thesis. Guided improvisations on specific pitches and open passages to continue *simile* after a given pattern are also frequently featured in the piece, as in other works that will be mentioned in the following chapters.

Twelve years after Marttinen, **Jarmo Sermilä** (b. 1939) approached the combination of bass clarinet and accordion in a much easier way to describe: minimalism.

> "I got interested in American minimalism at a very early stage, but many years were to pass before it influenced my work. Modifications of repetition technique have opened up new rhythmic potential that I suppose to feature large in my works of the 1980s and extending to all compositions of the 1990s" (Sermilä, n.d.).

As mentioned in his artist's credo, minimalism was a strong influence at the time Sermilä composed **Mechanical Partnership** for bass clarinet and accordion (1995). It is a suite consisting of five movements (*First Partner*, *Second Partner*, *Third Partner*, *Fourth Partner* and *Fifth Partner*), which can be played as a whole or just by taking one or more movements individually—in any order and with the possibility of inserting other pieces in between them in the same concert programme.

Sermilä takes advantage of the similarities that sometimes both instruments can have in terms of timbre to create five inventive episodes, where the interaction between the duo is explored under a different and fresh approach in each of them: from the accordion low pedal that opens the first movement before starting the rhythmical game, to the challenging unisons of the last one, through frantic syncopated patterns in the accordion against a more steady bass clarinet

[50] Music journalist Seppo Heikinheimo even coined the term 'Marttineism' in 1962, arguing that "Marttinen's music needed to be described using its very own ism" (Torvinen 2003, 50).

part in the *Second Partner*, graceful phrases *in modo arcaico* in the third, and the virtuosic demisemiquavers motives of the fourth one.

7.4.5 With winds

The combination of the bass clarinet with other wind instruments has not been explored as much as with other families. In Finland, we can find three main duo examples: the surprising ***Galdr*** (2000) for bass clarinet and French horn by **Harri Vuori** (b. 1957), ***Danza 4B*** (1993) for oboe and bass clarinet by **Jarmo Sermilä** (b. 1939), and ***Glow within*** (2018/2020) for flute and bass clarinet by **Maija Hynninen** (b. 1977).

> "Galdr is ancient Germanic magic poetry. Galdr was secret, and little is known of its metre; however, its strong use of alliteration relates it in feel to the Finnish Kalevala. The instrumental work is related to galdr through its wild and magical sound world and through its form and its initial-stressed phrases" (Vuori 2001, 2).

This magical sound that the composer refers to is already invoked by the instrumentation of the piece per se, and, ultimately, the reason why he undertook such a unique combination of instruments—bass clarinet and French horn:

> "Bass clarinet and bassoon might have been a possible composition, as well as bass clarinet and cello, but these are quite sophisticated and lyrical alternatives; I wanted a slightly more barbaric sound. I thought that just with that instrumentation, I could achieve the ancient sound that the subject and title of the work required" (Vuori 2021).

In addition to the atypical choice of instruments for *Galdr*, the way the composer used them was also equally decisive to create the sonority he was after. As a starting point, he gives the French horn quite a wide range of almost four octaves to match exactly the same one that he employs in the bass clarinet. Once setting the members of the duo at the same level, he explores common features of both instruments' sonic worlds: *glissandi*, *molto vibrato*, multiphonics, *frullato*, etc. Either simultaneously, in a canon-like fashion, or independently from each other, these effects play an important part in creating the intense and rich sound that the composer was looking for. Barbaric—the word that Vuori used in a conversation we had—is, in my opinion, a perfect adjective to describe the final result. Personally, I understand it as referring

to something from the past, primitive, but, at the same time, of a very human nature, probably because the French horn itself already has that quality. The use of the voice in both parts and in many different ways (whisper and singing through the instrument, singing while playing, singing while playing a multiphonic, singing a *glissando* while playing a long tone, etc.) surely contributes to that perception.[51] Harri Vuori was definitely not mistaken when he envisaged the sonic potential of this combination—a duo of which I am not aware of any other example in the existing repertoire.

While still not very common either, the combination of the bass clarinet with the oboe, and particularly with some of its lower versions, such as the cor anglais and the bass oboe, already has some precedents in the contemporary music literature.[52] Jarmo Sermilä approached this duo with a dance piece, where rhythm and the flavour of minimalism are again present throughout, both in situations of strict rhythmic unison or through interwoven patterns between the two instruments. Nevertheless, Sermilä still finds room for individual longer melodic lines in the slower sections of the piece, as the structure of *Danza 4B* is clearly defined by different metronome markings.

Compared with the previous two pieces, Maija Hynninen's work *Glow within* for flute and bass clarinet comes from a much richer tradition of combining flutes and clarinets in many different ways, from which Luigi Nono's *A Pierre. Dell'azzurro silenzio, inquietum* for contrabass flute, contrabass clarinet and live electronics (1985) is, in my opinion, one of the most astonishing examples. In *Glow within*, Hynninen concentrates on a sonic landscape dominated by small noise-like gestures, such as inhaling and exhaling through the instruments, air sounds, key clicks, key clicks with air, only-air passages, half-tone-half-air passages, singing while playing (only in the flute), adding different consonants and vowels, etc.: "[…] fuzzy textures that are full of movement yet not going anywhere […] as if wanting to say something, but no words come out" (Hynninen 2018). All this material contrasts with a central section in which a microtonal chorale of soft multiphonics in the flute is built upon a bass clarinet longer line of multiphonic trills, which seems to be the origin of the whole piece, including the title:

[51] "Sing while playing: Rough sound, like vomiting" for the French horn, and "Sing a very rough sound through the instrument, don play!" for the bass clarinet, are some of the instructions given in the score by Vuori (2001, 3, 9).

[52] For instance, Henri Bok and Canadian bass oboe specialist Lawrence Cherney were active in that field in 1995–97 as duo *Bass Instincts*, what resulted in several new pieces.

> "For me the very low and soft bass clarinet pitches seem to gain a glow, an aura from the high overtones that emerge from them. Together with the chords played by the flute, they are at the same time intense and fragile—they seem to glow from within" (Hynninen 2018).

Aside from grouping several bass clarinets together, which will be dealt with in more detail in chapter 9.3, there are pieces that combine the bass clarinet with other instruments of the clarinet family:

***Broken* Lullaby** (2009) for clarinet and bass clarinet by **Riikka Talvitie** (b. 1970) is an exquisite example. "Behind the piece there is a swinging lullaby. A tour of this lullaby is strange and bumpy—it is interrupted all the time, but still it goes on. On its way it meets sticky noises, snotty drumming and untuned bells. But it goes on", writes Talvitie (2009a) in her own notes. Indeed, the composer makes a skilful combination of airy sounds, different multiphonics, *frullato*, trills and tremolos, microtones, etc. between both instruments to create a very particular soundscape. Every time the lullaby emerges from it, it does it under a different shade, which creates a truly mesmerising effect.

Remember Anton Pann for E-flat clarinet and bass clarinet (2010) by **Adina Dumitrescu** (b. 1964) is a piece of a considerably smaller scope than Talvitie's duo. The extensive use of *glissandi*, both in written out rhythms and *senza misura*, and the presence of some modal scales and melismatic motives lend the piece a colour that might remind the music of Anton Pann, as the piece is a variation of a song by this nineteenth-century composer, folklorist and Romanian-language poet.

To close this section, I mention a very unconventional combination of instruments used by **Eero Hämeenniemi** (b. 1951) in ***Distant cousins*** (1995): bass clarinet and didgeridoo. Putting together such two vibrating forces sounds like an appealing idea for an intense piece. As the duo with piano *Duaali*, this piece was born within the composer's own group *Nada* (see chapter 7.4.3), so improvisation plays again an important role, although that is not a surprise in Hämeenniemi, who talks about improvisation as "an essential part of any healthy musical culture" (Korhonen 2007, 178).

After an introduction in which Hämeenniemi (1995a, 1) instructs both instruments to "improvise on the overtones" in softer dynamics, they both grow towards an *Allegro furioso* in

10/8. The first beats in unison will set the base for the rhythmic ostinato that the didgeridoo will keep on playing with variations, and from which the bass clarinet will start to diverge soon with the introduction of more melodic gestures.[53] Once the rhythmic features of the meter have been explored through recurrent accents, the didgeridoo continues its variations in the same *Tempo I*, but the bass clarinet goes into a more free and lyrical section: *Andante independente.* It will still come back to the rhythmic ostinato in 10/8 for one more bar, to start an improvised solo freely in *Tempo I*, then in *Tempo II* and finally in both. The written 'exit' in *Tempo II* leads the bass clarinet part to a low D with free overtones, as in the opening, but allowing the didgeridoo to improvise a solo in *Tempo I* to end the piece.

Larger wind ensembles

Although this chapter is mainly focused on duos, there are some pieces in the Finnish repertoire for larger wind ensembles including the bass clarinet—all of them being somehow variations of the classical wind quintet—which are worth mentioning:

Nils-Eric Ringbom's ***Sestetto*** for oboe, cor anglais, clarinet, bass clarinet, bassoon and French horn from 1951 is the second chamber music piece in the Finnish repertoire that includes the bass clarinet. As most composers of his generation, Ringbom (1907–1988) started his career under the influence of Sibelius, and moved progressively from that late romantic, more traditional style, towards different directions, such as the "dissonant Neo-Classicism à la Hindemith in the Wind Sextet" (Korhonen 2003, 75). Contrary to what one could initially think for being such an early piece using the instrument in Finland, Ringbom is very compelling in the treatment that he gives to the bass clarinet:

- Quite an ambitious use of the range that, although does not go below the low E, reaches a high G in the fourth octave of the instrument.
- A very natural integration with the rest of the sextet, both with the higher instruments (oboe, cor anglais and clarinet), but also making a very affective tandem with the bassoon and the French horn.
- An active participation in all the thematic materials.
- An interesting allocation of several solo passages, sometimes completely alone, such as the very end of the first movement *Introduzione e fughetta scherzosa*, and also initiating new

[53] It is necessary to have a didgeridoo in C, which will match the bass clarinet low D.

motives that will be later elaborated by the rest of the group, as it happens quite often in the third and last movement *Metamorfosi*.

In 2008 **Lotta Wennäkoski** (b. 1970) completed ***Suka***, another woodwind sextet, this time, sharing instrumentation with the celebrated *Mládí* (1924), by Czech composer Leoš Janáček (1854–1928): flute, oboe, clarinet, French horn, bassoon and bass clarinet. *Suka* is the result of a commission by the Kalevala Society for the 160th anniversary of the *Kalevala*, Finland's national epic, in 2009.[54] Together with nine other composers and ten visual artists, Wennäkoski was asked to create a contemporary interpretation on different parts of this mythical work, as many generations of artists did in the past, Sibelius being one of the most obvious examples. Wennäkoski was particularly given the section known as the first Lemminkäinen cycle (poems 11 to 15) which is about this main character's courting in Pohjola, and his death and resurrection by his mother (Järvinen 2010, 20–22). Even without knowing the plot, *Suka* immediately gives off a powerful dramatic sense, both in the music itself and in the dramaturgical arch described by the composer from beginning to end, connecting all the seven scenes in which the piece is divided. Uttering different syllables and words, and whispering into the instruments by the musicians, contributes to the intensity of the work even more. As in all of her bass clarinet pieces, Wennäkoski makes an unreserved use of the instrument, obviously much more adventurous than Janáček, but that applies to the rest of the sextet as well, the oboe having to double with recorder in one passage.

[54] Elias Lönnrot (1802–1884) published a first version in 1835 and a new edition in 1849, which is the one commonly known as the *Kalevala* nowadays. It is divided in fifty poems and reaches up to 22.795 lines of verse (Järvinen 2010, 72–73).

8 RAQS

8.1 Bass clarinet and percussion

With its great dynamic range, the bass clarinet is comfortable playing from subtle softs to stunning louds. This is equally a unique feature of percussion instruments, so combining them seems like a very natural marriage, and it is no surprise that many musicians have joined forces to create such ensembles. Above all, one ensemble deserves special mention: *Duo Contemporain* (Henri Bok, bass clarinet & Miquel Bernat, percussion).[55]

Being also a saxophonist, Bok came across a piece for alto saxophone and marimba—*Divertimento* by Akira Yuyama—which fascinated him, and he decided to program it into one of his concerts. "After working on that piece, I also wanted to try the bass clarinet with the marimba. So we tried some improvisation, and afterwards we said: this is such a nice combination of sounds, let's make a duo!" Bok then went to the Gaudeamus Foundation, which put a 'call for scores' advertisement in its international magazine and also gave him a list of similar organisations in other countries. "Remember that this was before computers, and before internet; just 'snail mail'. You can't imagine how many letters I wrote and signed. I sent all these letters to those organisations and they contacted composers… long story…" (Bok 2016).

Long story, but looking at the result, it was worth the effort: over its 21 years of artistic activity between 1981 and 2002, *Duo Contemporain* accumulated an original repertoire of nearly three hundred works.

Nowadays, more than 40 years after that pioneering idea was born, the instrumental combination of bass clarinet and percussion has firmly established itself as a significant ensemble in the field of contemporary music. Nevertheless, and despite the vast array of percussion instruments we can find, it is quite often that the marimba and the vibraphone emerge as the central figures in this repertoire, either alone or combined in different multi-percussion setups. For that reason, and in order to present a more unconventional way of combining the bass clarinet with percussion, which was the topic of my third doctoral concert

[55] The original percussionist was Evert le Mair, but the fact that the most important recordings and the connection with the most prominent composers took place during the second period of the duo (from 1991) when Bernat was there, might explain why he is usually considered as the percussionist of *Duo Contemporain*.

(12 March 2016), I commissioned from composer Mikko Hassinen (b. 1971) a piece that employed ethnic percussion: *Raqs*.

8.2 *Raqs*, for bass clarinet and tombak, by Mikko Hassinen (2016)

As mentioned, the commission of *Raqs* was in response to my attempt to contrast with the rest of the programme in my third doctoral concert, but also with the bass clarinet and percussion repertoire in general.

When I decided to include a piece of this kind, I soon thought of composer Mikko Hassinen since he is also a very active percussionist. Although he is probably better known as a drummer, arranger, composer and conductor in the field of jazz, his interest in contemporary classical music has continued to grow over the last twenty years. Furthermore, he is also well-versed in ethnic percussion.

After trying several Middle-Eastern and North-African percussion instruments, such as the bendir or the riq, the composer finally scored the piece for bass clarinet and tombak—a Persian goblet drum similar to the more popular darbuka, but slightly bigger and made out of wood, allowing for a warmer tone and attack.

Raqs is the Arabic word for dance, but the dance that Hassinen presents in his piece is somehow 'warped' by the use of microintervals and irregular rhythms. After an improvised long roll by the tombak, the bass clarinet begins its own solitary, distorted line, as shown in Figure 20.

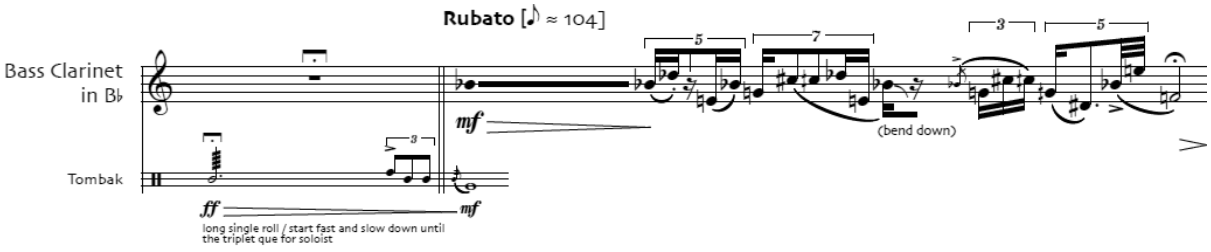


Figure 20: Beginning of *Raqs* (Hassinen 2016a, 2; Music Finland).

Rather episodic at the beginning, it gains fluidity when the percussion comes into action and, as the piece unfolds, the primary hectic rhythms evolve towards more steady and lyrical passages. At the same time, the tombak groove becomes more active, although it is always kept

as a background for the bass clarinet's dizzy melodies. The work's culmination finds the bass clarinet literally screaming in its *altissimo* register until it is abruptly interrupted by the wooden sound of the tombak frame, a signal that inevitably leads the 'dance' to its conclusion (see Figure 21).

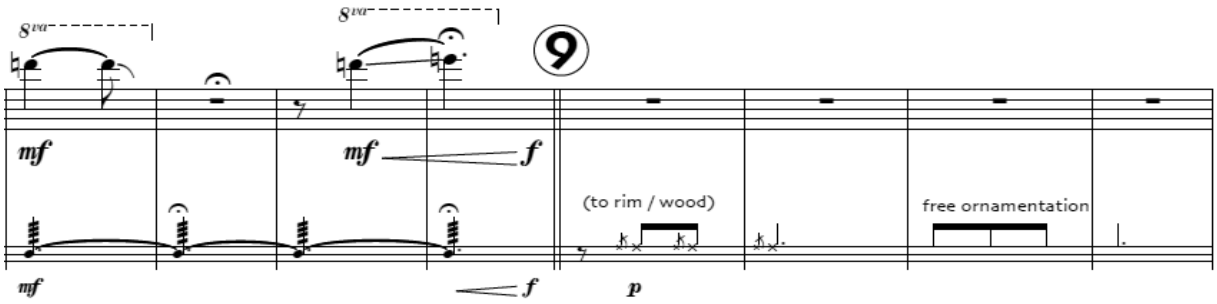


Figure 21: Bars 83–90 of *Raqs* (Hassinen 2016a, 6; Music Finland).

The piece has a special flavour, not only thanks to the sound of the tombak, but also because of the very specific 'voice' in which the composer asks the bass clarinet to 'speak', as Hassinen (2016a, 1) specifies at the beginning: "Bass clarinet part should be played in the style of Turkish clarinet tradition with airy, breathy sound". Nevertheless, the idea of using the concept of Turkish clarinet sound was not an immediate or very obvious decision, and it took a while until it crystallised in the way that was finally integrated into the piece.

In one of the first meetings in which we were working on actual sketches of the piece, the composer showed me a short audio excerpt of Turkish clarinet music to illustrate several techniques he was interested in, with the idea of including something similar in the piece. As outsiders to the Turkish tradition, we talked about the extensive use of *vibrato*, the abundant microtonal inflections, and other ornamentations such as *glissandi*, pitch bends and quick melismas and embellishments, as well as possible ways of notating them.

Few weeks later, in our next meeting, the new sketches that were already pointing towards a more advanced version of the piece did not include that allusion to the Turkish clarinet tradition we had been talking about. As the composer said, the music started to grow in a certain direction in which the idea of including a Turkish clarinet reference did not fit anymore, which was somehow surprising, since from our previous conversations it was quite clear to me that this was the creative impulse that was driving him from the beginning. That is why I still wanted to play for him my own version of the Turkish clarinet excerpt he showed me in our last working session, and which I had transcribed, practiced and listened to for almost a month. Similarly, I

also played the beginning of the part he gave me that morning, employing that same kind of sound production I previously used to 'emulate' the Turkish clarinet folk tradition and trying to demonstrate in which way I could be able to recreate that sound world. The composer's reaction showed how captivated he was by the new atmosphere that the style of sound I used in my playing brought to the music:

> "Oh, that sounds so beautiful! I haven't ever heard that kind of bass clarinet sound! I really would like to change some things again after hearing this and get closer to my original idea. […] My melodies suddenly started to sound as if coming from a different world" (Hassinen 2016b).

Once again, the thoughts of Charles Ives about the 'tyranny' of the instrument and its apparent restrictions, as they sometimes stand in the way of the composer's idea, come to mind very strongly here (see chapter 4.2). Using Ives' words: the idea of that particular bass clarinet sound was "the germ of the whole thing" (Ives 1920, 100).

As a result, the composer finally decided to use that very singular way of producing the sound as the basis for the whole piece, and then left the rest of the ornamentations and embellishments for the performer to add *ad libitum*, with the exception of very few suggestions he includes in the score as an example (see Figure 20). As we both concluded, notating everything in detail would have only added a lot of extra information to the score but still without addressing the key feature of the piece: the sound. In fact, Hassinen was not able to incorporate that into the piece until hearing my practical demonstration and realising what was really possible, even though we had already discussed all the necessary techniques separately.

This could be somehow related to the aforementioned example of Toshio Hosokawa and his *In Die Tiefe der Zeit* (see chapter 4.2). In both cases I tried to look for the idea I thought the composers had in mind when thinking about their music. In the case of Hosokawa, I did it with a finished piece on which I could not have any further influence other than just offering my own version of it. But in the case of Hassinen, I was present during the whole process of composition, and that collaboration had an actual influence on the final result of a piece that would have been quite different otherwise.

By requiring this specific style of sound from the bass clarinet, Hassinen takes a different approach to 'openness' in a composition and freedom for the performer from the situations that

have been previously described. It is not the freedom of the improvisation that Whittall proposes in the final section of his *A fragile peace*, neither the kind of freedom that one should take when facing Moreno's *IN-AUDITO*. Even though all these different situations can be labelled as freedom for the performer, it becomes evident that individual pieces require individual approaches.

The freedom in *Raqs* corresponds mainly with the imagination of the performer to 'visualise' and recreate the sound and atmosphere that the composer portrays. In this sense, listening to old Turkish clarinet masters, such as Mustafa Kandirali (1930–2020) and Deli Selim (1945–1995), and the sound of the metal clarinets in G often employed in their performances, always sounding so striking to our western-educated ears, has been an endless source of inspiration for me when searching for my own sound world for the piece. Nevertheless, the term 'Turkish clarinet', provided by the composer in his description, is just an image for the performer to build up his or her fantasy and find a bass clarinet 'voice' as getting inspired by the music of *Raqs*. In no case the piece should be described or understood as written in a Turkish style in the purist sense of the expression. In fact, listening to clarinettists from other traditions, like the Greek virtuosos Petroloukas Halkias (b. 1934) and Yiannis Vassilopoulos (1939–2011), or even other woodwind instruments that are quite far from the clarinet, such as the double-reeded Armenian duduk, has also been very inspiring for me in that respect.

Sound—or, to be more accurate, the performer's own 'visualisation' of that type of sound—is actually the only aspect that Hassinen borrows from Turkish music: no actual scales, temperaments, rhythms or time signatures, but just how his own voice as a composer resonates within one of the richest and most diverse musical traditions.

8.3 Finnish music for bass clarinet and percussion

The first three pieces for bass clarinet and percussion in Finland were composed in 1983 by Jarmo Sermilä, Herman Rechberger and Tauno Marttinen. They all were written for *Duo Contemporain*.[56]

[56] According to Henri Bok (2022), Usko Meriläinen (1930–2004) was also interested to write for *Duo Contemporain* and sent them fragments and sketches to try out, but he never delivered a complete version.

Clockwork Etudes (1983), in which the percussionist combines vibraphone and marimba, is the earliest of all pieces by **Jarmo Sermilä** (b. 1939) discussed in this thesis, and therefore, the influence of minimalism is not yet as obvious as in his music from the 1990s. The piece starts with both players performing their parts quite independently from each other, after which they gradually come more and more together. This inner structure gets reinforced visually on stage, with the mallet player always keeping the same position, and the bass clarinettist moving through four different sets, from far away to close by. At the same time, the composer also allows minimalistic impulses into the piece, until they are fully present in the last of the eight movements or etudes in which it is divided:

- The first three etudes (*I. Rubato elegiaco, II. Espressivo, III. Rubato multifonico*) have only some timing indications about approximate durations, as well as several cues for the players to react freely to what their partner is playing.
- At the end of the third etude, while the bass clarinettist fades out with a looped series of multiphonics, the marimba player is asked to find a steady tempo for the motives that had been played more freely before. Only then, the bass clarinet player can start with the next two etudes (*IV-V. Ben ritmico*), which are already required to be played in a common same tempo.
- In the sixth etude (*VI. Presto improvvisando*), both players have the indication of playing *staccato* rhythmical patterns of one to four notes between some given pitches, sempre *crescendo poco a poco* and with the range of allowed pitches ascending from the lowest register to four octaves higher. Despite the improvised figurations, only marked in the score by an apparently chaotic graphic notation, the fact that both lines evolve in the same direction and with the same materials gives a surprisingly strong feeling of togetherness. This movement culminates with a loud multiphonic in the bass clarinet, *diminuendo al niente*, and the transformation of the material of the marimba into the beginning of the next one.
- In the seventh etude (*VII. Giocoso*) the marimba is given several ostinatos of demisemiquavers. On the top, the bass clarinet performs playful sequences of quavers, with the pauses in between them *ad libitum*.
- The final etude (*VIII. Con moto*), *attacca* from the previous one, finds the bass clarinet joining the ostinato of the marimba, introducing an interesting game of accents for a final minute and a half of accurate precision and intense collaboration between the duo.

Another piece from 1983 is ***All'ongharese***, in which **Herman Rechberger** (1947–2022) draws inspiration from the Hungarian musical folklore throughout five contrasting movements, all of

them with a Hungarian title: *1. Sírjál, sírjál, szép szüz virág* (weep, weep, beautiful virgin flower), *2. Kis verbunk* (small verbunk), *3. Kalitkaban foglaltalak* (I kept you in a cage), *4. Alföldök* (lowlands), *5. Népdalok* (folk songs). The percussion set employed by the composer consists of vibraphone, bass drum, two cymbals and tambourine.

> "When *Duo Contemporain* started to receive original pieces in the early eighties of last century, many of those pieces could be categorised as 'catalogue' pieces, in which all the new contemporary techniques of the bass clarinet in particular, were featured. *All'ongharese* would fit in that category, although in my opinion Herman was very knowledgeable about the specific possibilities of the instruments. Many of the pieces written in that period were characterised by freer forms, aleatoric elements and improvisation" (Bok 2022).

As it has been explained in other works by Rechberger from the same period, such as *Sirba*, for three clarinets, bass clarinet and tape (see chapter 6.3), and *Szene am…*, for bass clarinet and piano (see chapter 7.4.3), this freedom and improvisatory character to which Bok refers also applies to *All'ongharese*. The *ad libitum* rhythms of the third movement, which mainly consists of a bass clarinet *Grande Solo* to be improvised over different long notes belonging to a progression of chords in the vibraphone (to be interpreted also with free rhythms on given pitches) is a good example. Similarly, the whole fourth movement, which is a graphic score, shows another approach of the composer to this compositional practice.

Another representative feature of Rechberger's music is the interaction between the modern sound world and the traditional elements, which in this case come from the Hungarian folk music, particularly well depicted in the second and fifth movements:

- The 'verbunk' (a traditional Hungarian dance form) of the second movement is where the untuned percussion has a more prominent role to provide the rhythmic support for the bass clarinet to 'dance' over it, although this is sometimes interrupted by multiphonics *ad libitum*.
- The 'folk songs' of the fifth movement are characterised by a constant pedal tone (G) with several variations in the vibraphone, and many ornaments in the melodic materials of the bass clarinet. In the last bars, the virtuosic running-note passages grow to the final climax in *fff* through a chromatic *crescendo* to end the piece in a high A in the fourth octave of the bass clarinet, joining the low pedal of the vibraphone and the major chord to which it belongs.

Unlike the other movements, where the instruments have a contrasting role, the first one is more about merging, with lots of unisons to be sounded as one instrument—especially when the vibraphone is bowed. Imitations between both instruments are present as well in this movement, such as 'dead' strokes in the vibraphone when the bass clarinet is asked to play *staccatissimo*.

The third piece from 1983 is ***Duo*** for bass clarinet and marimba op. 220, by **Tauno Marttinen** (1912–2008). It is much more conservative than the previous two, and the composer continues with the rhapsodic style of his previously mentioned piece with accordion. Two years later, in 1985, Marttinen composed another duo with marimba, in a very similar fashion: ***Metamorfos*** op. 245. The treatment of these instruments and their relation to each other is basically the same in both pieces: the marimba is used exclusively as a monophonic instrument, and the bass clarinet range, although exploring the third octave at times, very rarely goes over the first two. Contrary to what seems to be the norm when writing for this duo, Marttinen assigns the lowest of the two staves for the bass clarinet, as if giving it a bass role.

Timo Hietala (b. 1960) needs little introduction to bass clarinettists in Finland, as he is one of the Finnish composers in whose oeuvre the bass clarinet performs a prominent role. In ***Strutsi*** (ostrich) for bass clarinet, two percussion players and electronics (1995), besides also using the marimba, the composer employs many other instruments, including a large collection of ethnic percussion: two udus, a medium/small sized gran cassa, two sabar drums, two djembes, a talking drum, a sizzle cymbal, two ordinary medium sized cymbals, three different sized tam tams, a soprano steel drum and a large tom tom. Both percussionists have also a Midi drumKAT controller with sampled percussion effects (e.g. djembe and sabar chorus, high chimes, low drums, an angklung, etc.), which, together with the live electronics (different kinds of reverb and delays) and other samples, mostly from natural environments (e.g. partridges and kookaburras, among others), contribute to the very rich sound world that Hietala has in mind for this piece.

Even though *Strutsi* employs a surprisingly wide selection of ethnic percussion, it does not point directly to any particular folk tradition, as did *Raqs* with Turkish music (see chapter 8.2). Instead, Hietala uses all the resources he has at his disposal and combines them in many different ways to create ten short scenes that recreate a great diversity of soundscapes—ancient and modern at the same time, from a ritual dance to an atonal ballad.

As an example, the mysterious section IX is especially evocative, in my opinion, with a long sequence of free-duration multiphonic trills in the bass clarinet, and two gentle percussion rhythms, produced by a talking drum and a large tom tom played with a marimba mallet in one hand and pressed with the other in order to get higher sounds. Both drums are very distant at first but they go through a progressive *crescendo*, at the same time that the multiphonic trills of the bass clarinet also get more violent. In the background, samples of fascinating pygmy-singing voices, with an ethnic flute that comes and goes, and some crickets and grasshoppers towards the end, makes me personally hear the lush equatorial rainforest without even knowing how it actually sounds. The growing intensity of all the materials results in the next 'picture', with an unexpected marimba solo and the bass clarinet doing a kind of bass line, leaving the listeners wondering what they were listening for the previous four minutes.

The fact that Hietala is an experienced composer of film music might partly explain why he succeeds so well in awakening the imagination—of both performer and listener—with such diverse and heterogeneous materials that are brilliantly integrated into the piece. In addition, knowing the capabilities of the instruments he employs obviously helps to create all those 'sonic images' in a very natural way.[57]

The next two pieces for bass clarinet and percussion are again two duos with marimba, but with very different approaches from the one that Tauno Marttinen took 20 years earlier.

In ***After trace*** (2005), **Asta Hyvärinen** (b. 1963) makes a skilful use of extended techniques in both instruments. She not only adds the non-traditional sounds as a spice here and there, but integrates them as an organic part of the whole piece. Slap tongue, *frullato*, microtones, key clicks and a variety of effects using the air (toneless, ½-air sound, ¾-air sound, inhaling and exhaling through the instrument), in the bass clarinet, combined with saw-toothed sticks, *glissandi* over the resonance tubes, 'dead' strokes, moving the mallets back and forth along the tone bars and scraping them with the tip of the handle, in the marimba, create a whole load of different sounds, where everything is kind of muffled. In addition, very irregular rhythms, both individually and in the compound texture, dominate the piece, and the dynamics very rarely go louder than *mp*. With the exception of a few contrasting *furioso* passages, that kind of

[57] Hietala conducted studies on world music in Africa and India during the 1990s.

expression, which in a way is not completely full-blown, becomes the natural environment for the piece to develop in a very effective way.

Antti Auvinen (b. 1974) also explores timbre through extended techniques in his piece for bass clarinet and marimba ***Karkija*** (2007), but in a much more diverse way. Besides timbre, rhythm is another parameter that the composer treats with great imagination, from rhythmic unisons to polyrhythmic events and rhythmic improvisations on given pitches. Apart from meaning 'rough' in a Finnish dialect, the title also refers to a tribe in ancient Anatolia which rose up in rebellion against the Hittite Empire but was finally conquered around 1400 BCE. The piece certainly has a primitive, archaic, ritualistic spirit, even belligerent at some points, combining moments of contemplative and calm lyricism with fierce explosions of virtuosity.

The interaction between the bass clarinet and the marimba experiences a variety of processes, but always in service of the overall texture: dialogues, reactions to each other's impulses, totally independent lines, melody-accompaniment types of texture, or a chaotic and agitated pointillistic mix of timbres are just some of the situations the duo passes through. Even though the piece can be divided into several sections punctuated by relatively long pauses, a strong sensation of unity prevails throughout, pushing the listener nonstop from start to finish. Regardless its apparent complexity, *Karkija* opens up as a surprisingly fresh and spontaneous piece of music.

The last piece for bass clarinet and percussion in the Finnish repertoire is also the most recent of all that have been mentioned in this thesis. At the end of 2021 **Lotta Wennäkoski** (b. 1970) completed ***Rimbalzi***, in which she made use of a resource that increases the great artistic potential of this duo combination even more: giving the bass clarinettist the task of playing some percussion, while simultaneously playing the bass clarinet. As stated by Wennäkoski (2022a), the starting point of the piece was the idea of "bouncing against different surfaces", and the Italian title she gave to the piece similarly reflects that idea too, since it means 'rebound'. For that purpose, she employed a colourful percussion set-up, including a vibraphone, four different gongs, a bass drum, two suspended cymbals, a snare drum, two triangles (the first one lying on a table, the second one in a stand), a temple block, a medium cowbell and a güiro.

The piece starts with soft and dry quavers over the percussion, which the bass clarinettist also joins with a temple block to be played with the right hand, as the actual bass clarinet pitches can be all played just with the left one. Once putting the mallet away, the bass clarinet part is filled with more lively elements, as is the percussion with smaller divisions of the initial quavers. Both instruments move together through a rich tapestry of timbres and textures yet keeping the original pulse sensation strongly present. Finally, a big *crescendo* leads into a freer episode of syncopes with big intervals, in which the feeling of the beat is not as evident as it was until now. To close the first big section of the piece, we get the pulse back after a quick return to the quiet material of the opening.

The second section of *Rimbalzi* has a similar structure to the first one, but the 'rebounds' this time are much more resonant than the dry quavers of the beginning. The choice of the percussion instruments and mallets plays an important role in this regard—e.g. the motor of the vibraphone is now 'on fast', against the *secco* instruction of the opening. The tam tam the bass clarinettist has to play with the right-hand knuckles also makes a difference compared with the former temple block and allows a wider variation of elements to be included in the part than the only three different pitches that were used in the previous quavers. The music evolves again, but this time towards a completely free episode in the bass clarinet, instructed as "play freely and wildly very high" (Wennäkoski 2022b, 20). The syncopated part will come back with similar materials but keeping the resonant quality inherent in the second half of the piece, to give the percussionist a turn to let loose—"*quasi senza misura*: play freely and individually with the given instruments […], start very energetically and with quick patterns" (Wennäkoski 2022b, 23). Once it finally calms down, the bass clarinet can start a final singing line, delicately coloured by the resonance of the gongs, cowbell, vibraphone and güiro, all of them carefully placed in time to let the piece vanish into thin air.

9 RUMBO

9.1 Multiple bass clarinets

> "One bass clarinet is already amazing, two are incredible and with three and more, boundaries are surpassed and you won't believe your ears" (Sparnaay 2011, 114).

With this overwhelming enthusiasm, Harry Sparnaay refers to the *Bass Clarinet Collective*—an ensemble of six bass clarinets and three contrabass clarinets he founded in the 1980s. But long before Sparnaay's ensemble, Hector Berlioz (1803–1869) had the idea of grouping several bass clarinets. He was the first to praise the bass clarinet and its sound qualities in an orchestration text, with his *Grand traité d'instrumentation et d'orchestration modernes* (abbreviated in English as *Treatise on Instrumentation* or *Treatise on Orchestration*), published in 1844:

> "Depending on how it is written for and how well it is played, this instrument in its low register can take on the uncouth tone of the ordinary clarinet's bottom notes or the calm, solemn, priestly strain of certain organ registrations. So it may often be aptly used. Furthermore, if four or five are used in unison in wind bands the bass line acquires an admirably unctuous quality" (MacDonald 2002, 132).

One year before Berlioz pronounced this statement about grouping several bass clarinets in wind bands, Gaetano Donizetti (1797–1848) made an even more revolutionary contribution to the bass clarinet history, using two bass clarinets in the orchestra—something that is not considered a typical practice even nowadays. It was in the *Pas de deux* of Act II of his opera *Dom Sébastien, Roi de Portugal* from 1843 (Rice 2009, 364–365). After an introduction, Donizetti uses two bass clarinets and two clarinets, first alone, in a similar way to that in which Mozart uses two basset horns and two clarinets in the *Gran Partita*'s *Trio I* of the first *Menuetto*, later joined by the harp *arpeggios*, bassoons, French horns and strings. In Finland, Veli-Matti Puumala (b. 1965) also decided to use two bass clarinets in the orchestra of his only opera *Anna Liisa* (2001–2008).

Outside the orchestra, grouping bass clarinets in various combinations has definitely found its way, thanks to the surprisingly rich and varied results it can create. However, besides some

interesting works written for the aforementioned *Bass Clarinet Collective*, I was missing more recent works for bass clarinet ensemble that treat the instrument with the same craftmanship and depth as other works for smaller combinations of bass clarinets do.

All-bass-clarinet ensembles are quite popular in clarinet festivals and conferences. One of the main purposes of these events is to gather together a large group of bass clarinettists, with a repertoire that is often made of different arrangements (Khachaturian's *Sabre Dance*, to name just one surprising example) or pieces—usually of a light character—written for a certain number of bass clarinets that can easily be doubled, tripled, etc., to accommodate a larger number of players. Arthur Gottschalk's *The Kaleidoscopic Pocket Hockets Boogaloo*, originally written for eight bass and two contrabass clarinets, in which there is even a choreography for the performers, is a fantastic example that engages immediately with the audience and has already become a classic closing number since it was premiered at *ClarinetFest 2011* in Los Angeles. I acknowledge the value of these pieces, the benefit they do to our instrument and its promotion, and the obvious fun of both playing and listening to them. However, they do not always take full advantage of the potential that this combination of multiple bass clarinets has to offer. Therefore, since these kinds of works already exist, I was looking for something else with the commissioned piece for my fourth doctoral concert (17 February 2018), in which I explored the combination of several bass clarinets together. The programme started with a solo piece and increased the number of bass clarinettists on stage as it moved forward. To close the concert, I commissioned a piece for six bass clarinets from Lotta Wennäkoski (b. 1970).

9.2 *Rumbo*, for six bass clarinets, by Lotta Wennäkoski (2018)

My choice of composer this time was based on how much experience Lotta Wennäkoski had acquired in handling the bass clarinet from solo pieces to all kinds of chamber music combinations and concertos. Even in her orchestral writing, it is easy to glimpse her affection for the instrument.

Fascinated by dictionaries and the different meanings of words, the composer this time chose to name the piece with the Spanish word *rumbo*, as referring to 'direction' or 'course' in navigation. Being myself a native Spanish speaker, the first association that comes to my mind is that of a 'trip', and actually, this concept seems strongly in tune with the music of *Rumbo*.

The beginning is, in my view, one of the most intriguing moments in the whole piece: developed from a small gesture—a whispering *glissando* between a minor third, *quasi niente*, that starts in the bass clarinet 4 and gets echoed gradually in the rest of the parts—it expands naturally into a very original and colourful way of presenting the ensemble to the listener (see Figure 22).

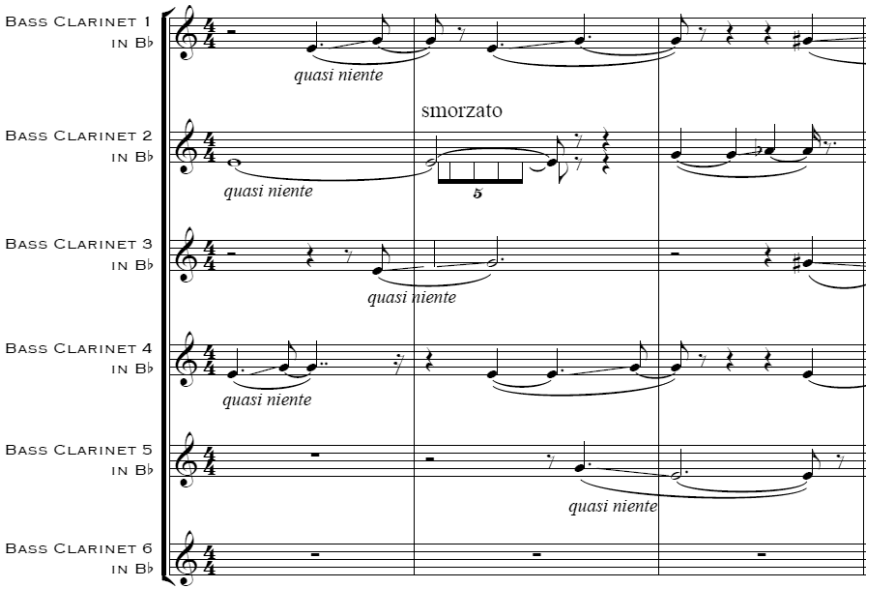


Figure 22: Beginning of *Rumbo* (Wennäkoski 2018, 2; Music Finland).

After this floating opening, each section adds a different dimension to the piece, while always maintaining the very rich sound world of timbres and colours which is such a significant feature of Wennäkoski's musical language.

Melodic lines are progressively introduced in a contrapuntal fashion, providing opportunities for all the parts to be in the forefront, although it is the bass clarinet 1 who normally takes a more prominent leading role. Likewise, the sense of pulse also gradually emerges. As the piece grows, the composer 'orchestrates' it with various types of multiphonics and other effects such as *smorzatto*, *bisbigliando* and airy sounds, creating a weirdly beautiful acoustical environment for the melodic material to inhabit (see Figures 23 and 24). Since some of these effects that Wennäkoski uses are particularly soft by nature—e.g. underblown multiphonics—the balance is something that must be carefully considered by the ensemble when performing this piece.

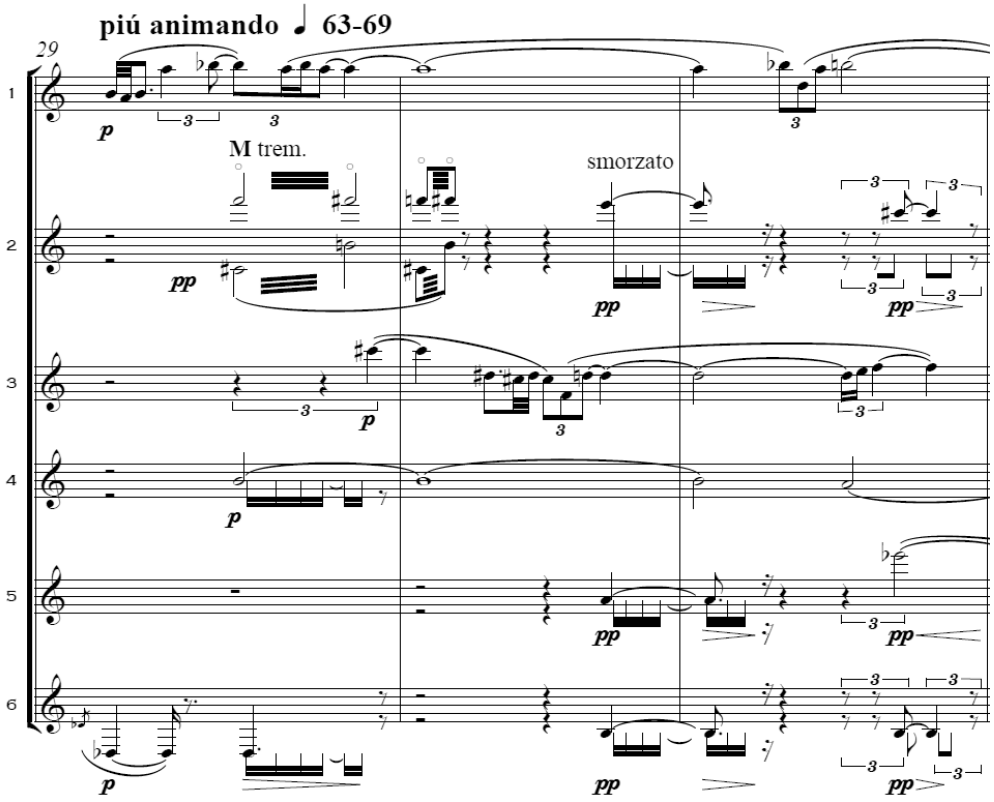


Figure 23: Bars 29–31 of *Rumbo* (Wennäkoski 2018, 5; Music Finland).

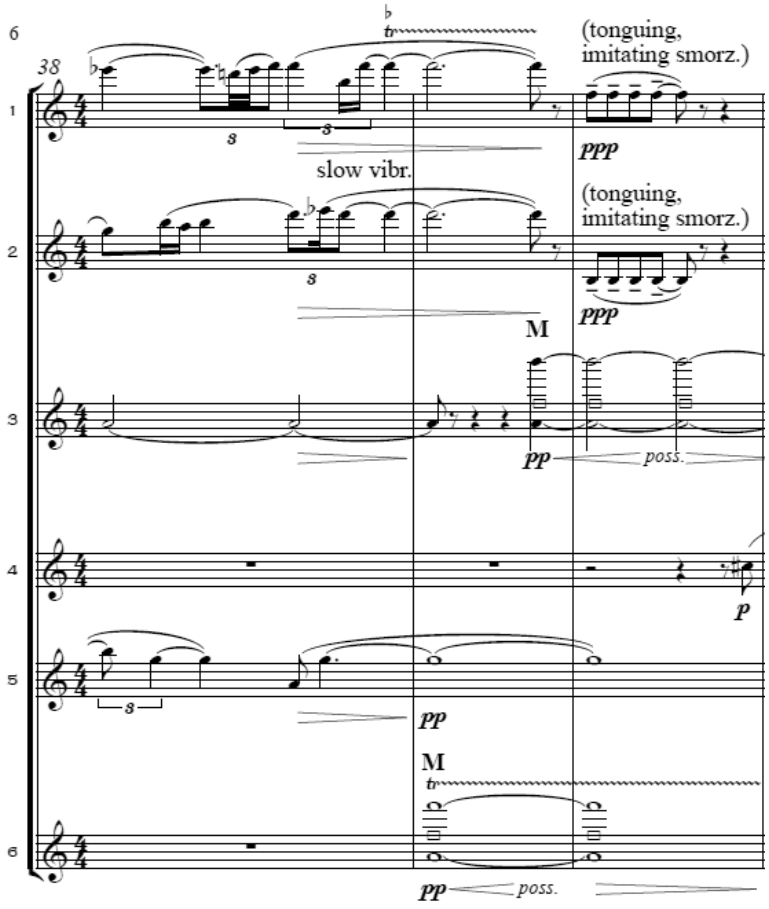


Figure 24: Bars 38–40 of *Rumbo* (Wennäkoski 2018, 6; Music Finland).

Finally, an intense drive takes over, as shown in Figure 25. In contrast with the vulnerability of the opening, this section shows the sonorous power the sextet can bring out and draws the piece to its climax—a culmination of the whole *crescendo* process that has been building up through the course of this 'trip' that *Rumbo* truly is.

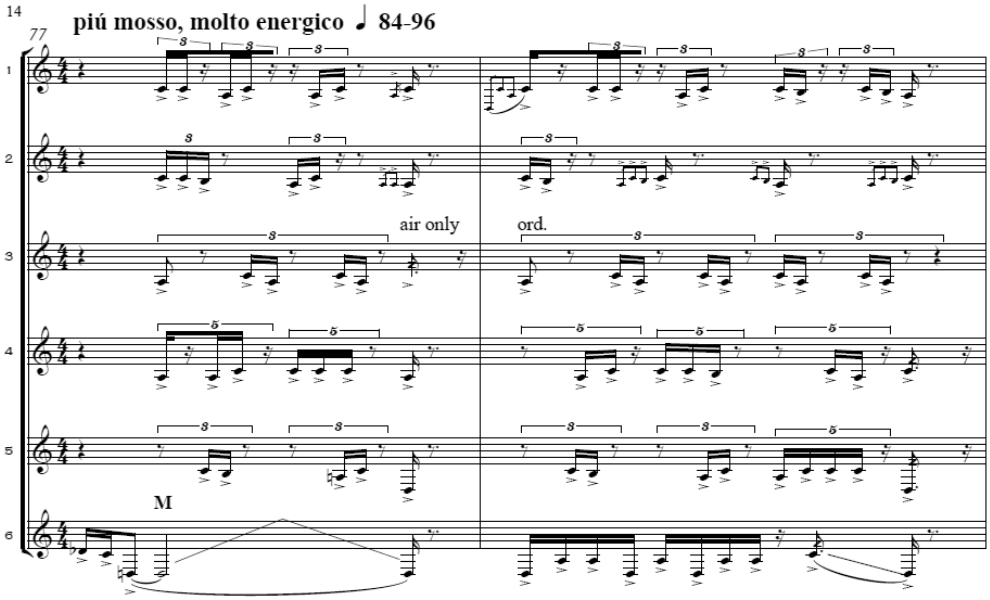


Figure 25: Bars 77–78 of *Rumbo* (Wennäkoski 2018, 14; Music Finland).

The last change of 'direction' takes the piece to its final epilogue: calmer and resembling some previous sections in character, but with a more clearly profiled melodic line which the bass clarinet 1 plays quietly in the lower register to the gentle and enigmatic accompaniment of the other five (see Figure 26).

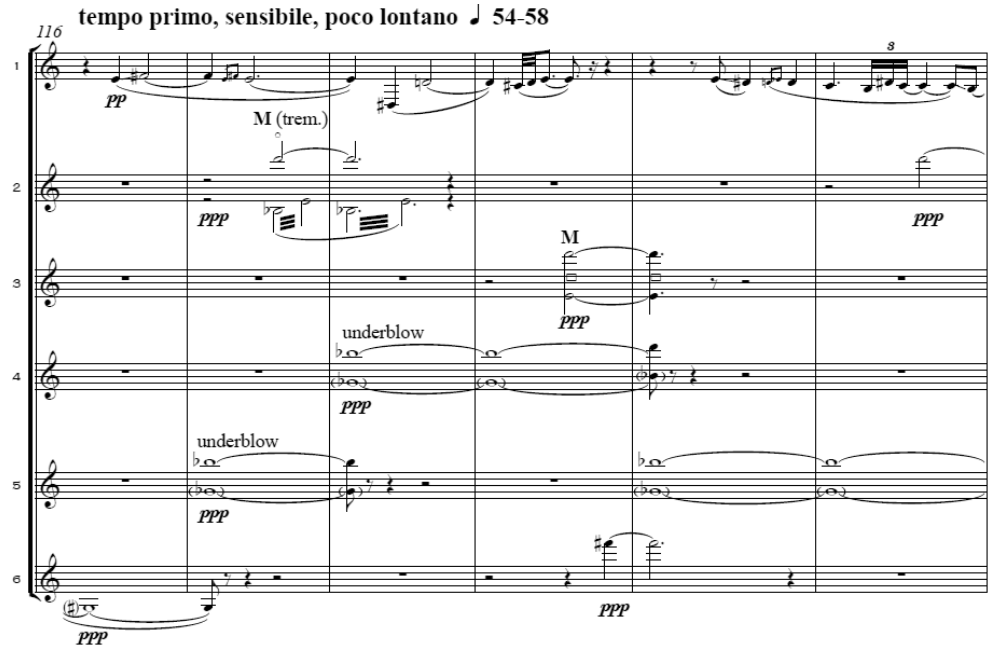


Figure 26: Bars 116–121 of *Rumbo* (Wennäkoski 2018, 22; Music Finland).

Overall, *Rumbo* is a transparent piece that radiates a particularly interesting sense of space and air, given the combination of instruments for which it is written. This clarity contrasts with the thick and dense textures other works for bass clarinet ensemble usually tend to create: six bass clarinets can turn into a really heavy ensemble if one wants them to. On the contrary, Wennäkoski seems to be more attracted to the lyrical qualities of the instrument, especially in the quietest region of its dynamic range.

9.3 Finnish music for multiple bass clarinets

The first Finnish composer who delved into the possibilities this same-voiced mixture affords was **Timo Hietala** (b. 1960) with his duo ***Last Two Lamantines***, from 1998. The title of this piece comes from a newspaper article (Holewa 1996) warning that the lamantine, i.e. manatee, had become an endangered species. But the title of *Last Two Lamantines* is not the only element that is charged with a strongly suggestive power. The music itself appeals directly to the fantasy of the listener, as Hietala uses the two bass clarinets as a metaphor for the last two of these large, friendly-looking animals on the verge of extinction.

Demonstrating a vivid creative sense for sound with the greatest originality and freshness, Hietala puts into play the extremely rich overtones spectrum of two bass clarinets to create a 'conversation' between the two animals. Nevertheless, this collection of colours and timbres is not presented merely as a string of sound effects, but as a musically coherent and fluid whole. Challenging as it may be, playing the bass clarinet in a piece like this is enormously rewarding: the degree of creativity and imagination which must be brought to the interpretation of a musical work is one of the aspects that, as a performer, I very much value.

In this respect, it is important to notice that the role of improvisation has a considerable weight throughout the piece, with the composer constantly inviting the bass clarinettists to contribute with their own creative ideas, but in many different ways: it can be from a very small degree with expressions such as "continue x-times", or "add one or two of your own effects"; through guided sections ("free improvisation with the given materials", "slowly with dignity, improvise 'chorale' from given scale using only minims, crochets, dotted crochets and quavers"); towards more freely improvised situations, such as "*fff* very fast free, upper register", or "put your mouthpiece to the 'plastic pipe' and improvise" (Hietala 1998a).

After an intense interaction between the two parts, a final improvised coda in which the bass clarinettists are asked to take their mouthpieces away and blow their instruments like a trumpet, "imitating fictional lamantine speech" (Hietala 1998a), and to use plastic hoses as instruments, gives a bewitching ending to more than twenty minutes of awe-inspiring bass clarinet music.

However, the plastic hoses to which the performers must attach their mouthpieces at the end of the piece are not the only 'extra-musical' element that Hietala includes in this duo. There are also whirly tubes to create a whistling effect when they are swung in circles, and some theatrical instructions for the performers to enter and leave the stage, which must obviously be adapted to each particular performing space: "Start playing even at the backstage. Move gradually to the stage", "FINE 1: Swing your pipes and walk away from the stage", "FINE 2: During applauses go back to your horns and play page No. 1 going back to backstage to have a cold beer" (Hietala 1998a). All that contributes to an even richer palette of possibilities and tools for the bass clarinettists to create an effective performance and make more room for their own creative impulses than what the music itself already allows.

I included this piece in the same doctoral concert where Wennäkoski's *Rumbo* was premiered, and one of the comments I got after the performance described the piece in a very accurate and meaningful way: "a mini-opera for two instruments".

Ten years before she completed my commission for bass clarinet sextet, **Lotta Wennäkoski** (b. 1970) had already tried her hand at writing for several bass clarinets. Her duo ***Andas*** (2008) is delivered in a much more compact format than Hietala's, as it was part of the project *ShortCuts*, in which the Austrian duo Stump-Linshalm (Petra Stump-Linshalm and Heinz-Peter Linshalm) commissioned a short piece of roughly three minutes for two clarinets or two bass clarinets from 34 different composers. *Andas* is a dynamic piece that, despite its short duration, goes through an interesting variation of emotions and moods: from haunting melodic materials to repetitive rhythmical patterns, and from fragile *molto delicato* passages to more furious sections marked *fff sempre*.

Behind this diversity of ideas, there is a recurrent key element that is present throughout and contributes to integrating all those materials and textures into the musical continuum: an imaginative use of air sounds and effects under different forms and dynamics, such as inhaling-exhaling patterns, various episodes of 'half air–half pitch', breathing through the instrument

while fingering a given passage or just an approximate gesture with only stems but no noteheads, and combining the use of air with other techniques such as *frullato*. Thus, the title, which in Swedish means 'breathe'.

In between these two duos by Hietala and Wennäkoski, we can find another piece for two bass clarinets written by **Tapani Länsiö** (b. 1953) in 1999: ***SonoS***. It limits the range of the bass clarinet to its two lowest octaves and concentrates on one single musical idea dominated by a game of accents and syncopes that move smoothly through constant changes of time signature with both parts progressing in contrary motion—the first one going down, and the second one going up. After reaching a central climax, the two voices start the way back to their original position, since *SonoS*, as implied by its title, is a perfect palindrome.

Besides the strictly musical differences that we can find between any two given pieces, the main difference between the aforementioned duos by Hietala and Wennäkoski, and this lies, in my opinion, in the conception of the work. While it is hard to imagine those previous two works played on any other duo of instruments than bass clarinets, *SonoS*, as indicated in the score, is a piece "for two bass clarinets or for two bassoons or for bass clarinet and bassoon or for bassoon and bass clarinet" (Länsiö 2007a).

As more recent examples of duos for bass clarinets in the Finnish repertoire, we can find ***King of Spades*** (2008/2015) by **Lauri Supponen** (b. 1988), and ***Prelude grotesque*** (2012) by **Petri Judin** (b. 1969). Both benefit from the very effective treatment of the two bass clarinets in a parallel movement. Supponen's work is much more condensed and unites the two players in both range and rhythm most of the time, although he also finds other imaginative ways of unfolding his three-minute duo, such as echoing each other. For his part, Judin embeds a wider variety of moods in a longer piece where, besides the parallel and oblique movements between the two bass clarinets, we can also find one part accompanying the other or both of them complementing to create a single line.

A similar case to Länsiö's duo regarding the instruments for which the piece was originally conceived is ***…aistin…*** (2001), for six bassoons or six bass clarinets, by **Harri Kerko** (b. 1968). It was premiered with bassoons, after which dancer Paula Tuovinen, captivated by its minimalistic textures, turned it into a choreography that was successfully presented at various dance festivals in Helsinki during the 2000s: "Eager to get more bassoon music for her dance

work, she commissioned two more pieces, Melankolia and Sklerosis" (Kerko 2020a). But those were conceived specifically as bassoon and dance pieces, which is not the case of *…aistin…* Nevertheless, that is probably the reason why *…aistin…* is a work more associated with the bassoon than with the bass clarinet, although Kerko (2020b) acknowledges that, from the beginning, he always considered the piece to be performed on bass clarinets as well, and by looking at the score it is clear that it would also work perfectly with a bass clarinet sextet.

The piece starts with a lively but quiet series of nonuplets played simultaneously by all six parts, but never with the same notes: *pp, sempre legato*. Progressively, several changes—in tempo, dynamics and rhythms—and, eventually, more melodic longer lines in some of the parts are introduced to keep the material in constant transformation, but always in a subtle, almost imperceptible way.[58] Nevertheless, although more changes are constantly introduced, the murmuring effect of the opening never stops and only towards the end the texture becomes more transparent, with the insertion of several broken chords divided among the six parts. At the end, all the parts, playing simultaneously groups of four, five, six, seven and eight notes, join in a long unison to ultimately let the fifth one alone finish the piece on that same note, after a final melodic comment of the fourth voice.

In the notes that accompany the score, Kerko (2003) uses a very illustrative metaphor for the character of the piece:

> "It's like a group of people whose chatting produces seemingly unchanging noise, which however keeps changing and every now and then one can hear clear words or sentences. The idea in the process is that no detail must stand out; the changes must be 'sensed'."[59]

The most recent piece for several bass clarinets in Finland is a quartet from 2018 by **Kalle Autio** (b. 1987): ***The Great Rodeo Fragments***.[60] The first time I heard of composer Kalle Autio was in 2016 with his *Two Songs on Texts of Catullus* for tenor, bass clarinet and piano, where

[58] For instance, one of the tempo changes that takes place at the beginning is between crochet equalling 48 and 62. For that change, the composer alternates several septuplets between all the nonuplets that are going on for quite a while, until all the parts are suddenly playing septuplets in the new tempo. Septuplets in that new tempo of 62 bpm produce almost exactly the same effect as the previous nonuplets in the old tempo of 48 bpm.

[59] "The Finnish word 'aistin' means simultaneously 'I am sensing' or 'sense organ' itself" (Kerko 2003).

[60] The original scoring is two bass clarinets and two contrabass clarinets, but the composer provides alternatives for the piece to be played by four bass clarinets, or by three basses and one contrabass.

he curiously asks the players to "improvise with erotic sounds all together" (Autio 2016, 6). This kind of provocative attitude seems to be a common feature in many of his works, proposing always quite unorthodox ways of presenting music, as if trying to escape from the academicism that is sometimes associated with a classical composer. Another case in point is his *Prison Gate Girls Song* for guitar and accordion, completed a year later, which includes a section under the instruction of "swear, yell and scream for each other in your native language as rudely and aggressively as you dare!" (Autio 2017, 10).

In his bass clarinet quartet there are 'battles' between two of the players, an improvised 'solo con absurdum', and a lot of sounds produced by means of extended techniques, such as free *glissandi* from the highest possible pitch, teeth on the reed, spectral multiphonic *glissandi*, more multiphonics, growl, singing and screaming while playing, etc. Nevertheless, there are also sections with ordinary playing, always with a strong sense of rhythm and a harmony dominated by open fifths and octaves that brings dark, archaic colours into play, as if driving inspiration from the language that American composer and bass clarinettist Cornelius Boots (b. 1974) often employed for his own ensemble *Edmund Welles: the bass clarinet quartet*.

According to the performance notes provided by Autio (2018), "it should be performed as the first piece of the concert or the first piece after the interval", since the opening is a guided improvisation with key clicks for the four players, which has to begin while the audience is still walking into the hall and should be repeated as long as it takes the audience to be seated.

9.4 Finnish music for solo bass clarinet

Since we have been going through different combinations of bass clarinets, this is probably a good spot to make reference to the simplest of them all: the bass clarinet alone.

Tauno Marttinen (1912–2008) appears once again as a pioneer in contributing to the Finnish bass clarinet repertoire with the first solo piece, from 1981: ***Maahinen*** op. 198 (the gnome).[61]

The different sections that Marttinen often uses to articulate his musical discourse fit well to portray the mythological character used for the title. The first section is a lyrical melody

[61] **Erkki Jokinen** (b. 1941) wrote an earlier piece for solo bass clarinet in 1979, called ***Air***, but it was later withdrawn by the composer.

initiated by a quaver triplet that evolves towards more exciting materials, very often with the indication of *stringendo* and taking the music to higher registers, which soon calms down to prepare the way for the next phrase. During the course of the piece, different episodes and ornaments, such as trills, sequences of repeated articulations on the same pitch, a central passage of slap tongue in soft dynamics—as if emulating a stealthy walk—or a playful section *Allegretto scherzando, sempre staccato,* stand out clearly from the more melodic surroundings.

Four years later, in 1985, Marttinen wrote a second solo piece with another descriptive title: ***Palava Pensas*** op. 253 (burning bush), making reference to the biblical passage in which God appears to Moses in flames from a burning bush. The piece opens *rubato*, in alternance between long tremolos on which Marttinen (1985b, 1) offers the possibility of adding "other colours and sounds"—a good opportunity to let higher partials shine on top in the form of multiphonic tremolos—and quicker sequences of semiquavers, which continue into the next section: *Allegro.* Always with the invitation to movement due to the many different groupings in which they are presented—sometimes even 14 noteheads under the same beams—these semiquavers develop into longer lines, first *Moderato,* and then, *Adagio.* Finally, after a final return to the material of the opening, which this time reaches *ff*, and a brief reminder of the previous *Adagio*, the piece ends with a long progression of minims and semibreves, plus a final breve, as if it will never end, like the inextinguishable fire of the bush that would not be consumed by the flames.

These two pieces by Marttinen contrast with the usually very demanding music for solo bass clarinet that was being composed at the time. Therefore, they could be of great value for inexperienced students or less advanced players wishing to explore the bass clarinet's different means of expression in a more conventional style, while still being challenging.

Soon after Marttinen's pieces, **Harri Suilamo** (b. 1954) brought on a completely different impulse into the writing for solo bass clarinet, as it was expected from a new generation of emerging composers in the 1980s with a firm commitment to modernism. This is what Suilamo wrote about his piece ***YELL - le Cri de Merlin?*** (1987), which seems to refer to the Medieval Arthurian legend of Merlin and his enraged reaction after being betrayed by the Lady of the Lake and finding himself forever captive:

> "Like the echoes awakened by a shriek in a mountain pass, the associations of a shout revolve around this work: the cries of Merlin, Munch, Ginsberg—all the cries we never hear" (Korhonen 1995, 7).

In this piece, the composer divides the material between three different staves, assigning a different task to each, with the exception of the beginning, where he adds a fourth one for an introductory episode of key clicks (or key slaps, as he calls this technique):

- The top stave corresponds with the bass clarinet part proper, overloaded with rough overblown multiphonics, *molto vibrato* passages, *glissandi*, quarter tones, trills, and quick successions of indeterminate pitches to be played very fast and indistinctly.
- On a second stave, the vocal sounds, always produced through the instrument, add another dimension to the instrumental line. We can find singing, pronouncing a variety of phonemes and syllables, inhaling and exhaling, and other instructions such as "speak nonsense" or "imitate vomiting" (Suilamo 1987, 7, 8).
- The lowest stave is intended for the most unusual task of the three: a heel-tremolo for which the composer, in his own notes at the end of the score, advises the performer to "acquire some proper kind of extra dais or platform, and place it on the estrade, in order to achieve (standing on it) by the heel-tremolos a gran cassa-like percussive sound" (Suilamo 1987, 9).[62]

The combination of all these complex sonorities creates a sense of restlessness which also carries on over the pauses where nothing actually happens, thus serving very well the intention of the composer, who states in the explanatory notes that "the key-concept of this piece is 'continuity'" (Suilamo 1987, 9).

Jyväskylä-based composer **Kai Niemienen** (b. 1953) made the next addition to the solo bass clarinet repertoire. As some composers have said that they are between East and West,[63] Nieminen (2022) claims to be a composer whose music is between North and South. "Most of

[62] It is remarkable that Kari Kriikku, in his recording of the piece from 1995 (Finlandia Records: 0630-12179-2), uses a set of jingles strapped to his leg with a result that is quite far from the gran cassa-like effect originally intended by the composer. Nevertheless, the piece has a very clear improvisatory character embedded, so this change was probably welcomed by the composer. However, if the lower, closer to the gran cassa, effect is preferred, my advice is to perform the piece sitting down and to have the legs freer to really do a proper heel-tremolo, up to *ff*, without compromising the actual playing of the instrument for obvious physical reasons.

[63] Korean compoer Isang Yun (1917–1995), who is well kwon to bass clarinettists for his monumental *Monolog* (1983), once said: "I'm a man living today, and within me is the Asia of the past combined with the Europe of today" (Duffie 1987).

his works have an extra-musical stimulus, alluded to in their titles" (Korhonen 2018), and those influences can be very diverse: from nature to other arts, from Finnish Lapland to Italian literature. For his solo bass clarinet piece from 1991, ***The Mist Hobgoblin*** (*Usvanhaltija*, in Finnish), he drew a similar mythological inspiration to that of Tauno Marttinen ten years earlier, but with a somehow more consistent work when looked at as a whole.

The piece is framed by a mysterious atmosphere dominated by long tones in the low register of the bass clarinet, to which the composer sometimes adds *frullato* or some grace notes to maintain the tension, while always keeping the dynamic down to *pp*. According to Nieminen (2022), "this mood represents the wind blowing through the hollow trees next to the river Tornio"—a very dear place to him in the Finnish Lapland. At the end, the same passage of the opening, which is slightly longer now, appears under a different shade, as it has to be overblown to create soft multiphonics based on those given notes. In between these two sections *Lento e cantabile*, the misty elf described in the title evolves to a more prankish character, with more agitated materials. Nevertheless, the composer reminisces on the atmosphere of the beginning throughout with the insertion of fermatas and other elements previously used, such as the aforementioned series of grace notes.

When played together with Nieminen's piece for bass clarinet solo and string orchestra *Dance Hobgoblin* (1998), they make the *Hobgoblins Suite*. In this case, *The Mist Hobgoblin* works as long introductory solo cadenza to the concertante piece, which features another long unaccompanied passage before the end.

Originally composed for solo bassoon in 1999, **Jukka Tiensuu** (b. 1948) soon adapted his ***Asteletsa*** for bass clarinet, which has nowadays become a more popular version than the original one. Everything in this is piece is a palindrome: from the title to the music itself and the choreography that the bass clarinettist has to perform while playing the piece, which starts and ends offstage.

Having the player move on stage can have a very powerful effect, but it also presents a challenge to the performer. My advice for this piece is to find an inner motivation for each musical gesture and its corresponding physical action and make them an indivisible unit to let any associations it might bring to each member of the audience fly freely. In a way, this has always been Tiensuu's attitude, since he has openly refused to talk about his music:

> "Jukka Tiensuu has systematically refrained from providing his works with programme notes. In renouncing the role of spokesman for his own music, he is trying to grant his audience the full joy and responsibility of reception" (Suilamo 1992).

This palindrome for walking bass clarinettist is, in my opinion, a perfect opportunity for the audience to experience how a piece can speak for itself with no unnecessary prejudices, arising either from the composer or the performer.

The next solo piece in the Finnish repertoire is by **Lotta Wennäkoski** (b. 1970), who has appeared already in several sections of this thesis with interesting works, all made in close collaboration with Heikki Nikula. ***Limn***, from 2002, is another excellent example.

> "I had to do a piece for bass clarinet and tape that would at some point feature a few phonograph recordings of Bartók from a hundred years ago […]. As time went on, I nevertheless wanted to be rid of the tape: to entrust the whole idea to a bass clarinet. Then I began to get sick of the whole folk song, and took determined steps to shake it off. I did not fully succeed, however: not a single line remained of the song and no two notes in succession, but there did remain a sort of shape, a gesture, progression, image, on which I produced and organised my material. And the relationship with the song began to take shape: I would just draw a picture of the song (limn; to draw, paint, illustrate)" (Wennäkoski 2002a).

Even though the composer states that the original folk melody does not finally appear in the piece, the beginning could be perfectly interpreted as such, somehow recalling how Bartók used a lengthy bass clarinet solo to open the third movement of his *Suite No. 2* for orchestra op. 4. Thereafter, Wennäkoski enriches that apparently simple singing line with fast figurations, big leaps, quarter tones, repeated pitches, multiphonics, and effective ways of using 'air' effects—from air only to full sound, with several in-between solutions and transitions—which she also combines with different articulations and key clicks, taking the piece in many different directions. Consequently, the performer should be ready to jump from one character to a completely different one, e.g. from *espressivo* to *scherzando* and back to *cantabile*. In order to successfully reach all those characters that the bass clarinettist will encounter through the barely ten minutes that *Limn* lasts, a crucial aspect, in my opinion, is to really follow the *quasi niente* indication of the beginning and build everything from there.

Timo Hietala (b. 1960) also took advantage of the opportunity to write for solo bass clarinet. When asked what the instrument means for him as a composer, Hietala (2018) said:

> "The bass clarinet became one of my favourite instruments while still very young, having heard it played live by Heikki 'Heba' Nikula. What a variety of timbres, registers and emotionally expressive possibilities! […] The sound of the instrument forms a natural link between different musical worlds: jazz, ethnic, popular and contemporary classical music. I suppose the bass clarinet represents for me music without borders or specific genres, existing in its own world of sounds and the imagination."

And that is exactly what he does in ***Musta sydän yhtä punainen kuin valkoinen***, from 2003: he explores some of his many concurrent influences, once again very skilfully blended together. From the initial "funky, with breathy Ben Webster humour" (Hietala 2003, 1),[64] the piece evolves to, among other atmospheres, a folk dance, modernistic textures, or a more archaic mood with a very expressive melody punctuated by a C pedal, which surprisingly is not the lowest pitch of the instrument but four octaves higher.

As in his bass clarinet duo *Last Two Lamantines*, the composer nudges the listener's social conscience with his inventive titling, which in this solo piece translates from Finnish as 'black heart as red as white', in reference to an article about a heart transplantation from a black donor into a white recipient.

Kimmo Hakola (b. 1958) was previously mentioned in chapter 7.4.1 when talking about his piece for bass clarinet and cello *Capriole,* from 1991. During the next ten years he composed quite a lot of music for clarinet: *loco* for a solo clarinettist using a pedal bass drum (1995), a *Clarinet Quintet* with string quartet (1997), *Diamond Street* for solo clarinet in C (1999), and a *Clarinet Concerto* (2001). All these pieces share similar materials inspired by Eastern folk music and klezmer, although always presented in a different guise and combined with new content—a technique also often used by the composer in his orchestral music. In this respect, the material used in *Capriole* is unique and highly original. In contrast, Hakola's other bass clarinet work to date, ***Virkku***, a solo piece composed in 2006, is very much based on the first movement of his *Clarinet Concerto.*

[64] Referring to the American jazz tenor saxophonist.

The title, which can be translated from Finnish as lively, or something that is awake, corresponds well with the series of semiquavers that the composer presents under many different forms, but always displaying a powerful sense of movement, representing the most substantial part of the piece. To balance that vigorous energy, Hakola features short episodes of a new and more static material, marked *Rubato (Adagio)*: a few bars of minims in softer dynamics—with the exception of some big *crescendos* towards the end—very often connected by a *glissando* line, ornamented with trills, *frullato* or multiphonics, and happening either on the high or on the low end of the bass clarinet range. The last of these episodes is much longer than all the others as it consists of all the previous ones put together one after another.

In 2011 **Adina Dumitrescu** (b. 1964) wrote ***Necklace*** for solo bass clarinet, with the following programme notes:

> "Putting together some warm stones, after that using cold shells, then pieces of shiny metals and (why not?) of unpolished wood; coloured differently, shaped differently in a regular squared or irregular (recommended) manner and with well contrasting sizes. All these small strong things together make a big thing which sometimes is circular, with no beginning and no end, or sometimes have a hidden beginning close to a hidden end" (Dumitrescu, 2011a).

In this piece, she uses those 'stones', 'shells', 'metal' and 'wood'—which at that time existed only in her imagination—to show different personalities.[65] With the exception of the last one, marked *ppp*, all those moods have in common an energetic, sharp-edged quality, and are always presented in loud dynamics and without ever employing the use of slurs—no matter whether they are low or extremely high, stable rhythms or irregular patterns in uneven meters, played with an ordinary bass clarinet sound or in the form of spectral multiphonics overblowing the whole passage. Together with constant vocal utterances from the bass clarinettist, which Dumitrescu (2011b, 2) divides between "low howling sounds" ('HU') and "high shouting sounds" ('HA'), all these different characters lend the piece a sort of neurotic temperament that will leave no one indifferent.

The frenzy that Dumitrescu injected into *Necklace* contrasts with the serenity of the next solo piece from the Finnish repertoire: ***Eau & Gaz à tous les étages*** (water and gas in all floors),

[65] Dumitrescu (2022) admits that the 'necklace' of this piece is a real one, but that she only found the material incarnation of that mental image in a small shop in Vienna on the day of the premiere, after the general rehearsal.

written by **Lauri Supponen** (b. 1988) in 2017. As confirmed by Supponen (2022), the piece was written knowing the overwhelming acoustics of the Emanuel Vigeland mausoleum (also known as *Tomba Emmanuelle*) in Oslo, although the premiere took place a few weeks earlier in New York.[66] In the premiere some reverb was electronically added, as the space was not reverberant, so that might be a solution when the hall does not meet the acoustic requirements the composer had in mind when designing the melodic lines to become chords, and the *'eau'* and *'gaz'* elements to mix together.[67] Afterwards, it was performed at the *Vapaan Taiteen Tila* (Space for Free Arts) in Helsinki, less reverberant than the Oslo venue, but with a special disposition that allowed the performer to be placed at the back of the hall with the audience 50 meters away, to maximise the reverb in the sound by minimizing the amount of straight sound heard by the listeners. In fact, the piece proves a very skilful use of how sound behaves in space, with sounds that sometimes seem to come from a distant source, although they are all produced from the same place.

The overall feeling is that the music flows at a slow pace, sometimes even under the indication of *immobile*. Nevertheless, the composer often inserts some inner movement into those long lines through faster figurations, although under the very particular acoustic conditions for which the piece was conceived, they never give the impression of altering the calmness and transparent textures that dominate the soundscape, but rather make them much more interesting. Only at the end, *come una fanfare*, Supponen makes use of some accents, *più f*, for a more agitated motive that soon relaxes and evolves into a placid, undulating line that takes the piece to the end. In addition to the illusionary multiphonics created by the alternation between several pitches at different speeds and rhythms, the use of proper multiphonics, such as those created by tremolos that let higher, easily variable partials come to the surface, contribute very effectively to the sonic richness of the piece.

The most recent piece for solo bass clarinet is ***Animal II*** (2020), by **Olli Koskelin** (b. 1955). It requires a genuine display of articulation speed, control and endurance on behalf of the bass

[66] "The reverberation time [in the Emanuel Vigeland mausoleum] is about 13 seconds, rising to 18 seconds at low-frequency" (Cox, 2014).

[67] *'Gaz'* is represented by a cross as notehead, aiming for an airy sound, and *'eau'* is represented by a circle around the notehead, to which Supponen (2017, ii) gives the name of bubble-note with the following description: "A quick, bubbling-once hairpin from niente to the designated dynamic and back to niente. The overall dynamic resumes on the next note." Both elements usually appear in long sequences of same-pitched slurred figures, combined also with ordinary ones. The overlapping of all those different sonorities, attacks and dynamics, thanks to the reverberation, results in a charming sound of slow but constant oscillation.

clarinettist, as the whole piece is based on series of demisemiquavers that only get faster—from crotchet equalling 54 to 70, with some exceptions that go back a few bpm, but always aim for the final *presto possibile*. The dynamism of the music resembles Koskelin's *Exalté* (1985) for solo clarinet, but while this 'classic' from the 1980s builds up very gradually from a single pitch, *Animal II* gets to full blast much more quickly, and it does it all over the first four octaves of the instrument. Besides some sequences of chromatic microtones that bring a fresh contrast to those bouncing intervals, the composer employs another element under the general indication of *grottesco* (either *poco*, *assai*, *più* or *sempre più*). Through those *grottesco* bars, he presents the music in a more chaotic and irregular way than the usual demisemiquavers. A final episode of trills and tremolos, *senza misura*, *dolce tranquillo*, unwinds the accumulated intensity, after which the 'animal' dies away with a short series of soft slaps in a brief reminder to the rhythmical activity that has prevailed throughout most of the piece.

10 THE PROCESS OF BECOMING

10.1 Music involving other artistic disciplines

Contemporary music can be delivered in a wide range of environments, and it offers many possibilities both for composers and performers. Therefore, breaking with the conventional format of a traditional concert and integrating extra-musical components into music has already become common practice among contemporary composers.

As an example from the bass clarinet literature, we can take one of the most influential exponents of instrumental theatre, a man who was at the forefront of the European avant-garde scene during the second half of the twentieth century: Argentine-German composer Mauricio Kagel (1931–2008) and his *Schattenklänge* (shadow sounds) for solo bass clarinet from 1995. Even though the composer also gives the possibility of performing it as a concert piece, the main idea behind this work—and from which it takes the title—is to present a staged visualisation of it. For that, the barefoot bass clarinettist has to stand on a rectangular podium behind a white screen with black curtains on the sides, to be "visible on the projection surface only as a shadow contour cast by light sources directed at him", as Kagel (1997, I) describes in the performance notes that accompany the score. The combinations of simultaneous spotlights from different angles and distances, which are also reported by Kagel in the performance notes, with variations in intensity and transitions, creates the intersection of shadows of many kinds, with their own refractions and distortions. This visual effect is emphasised even further by the slow movements of the soloist when pacing from one stand to another, turning around, facing left or right, etc., in order to read the rest of the score pages placed conveniently on the floor to avoid any additional shadows to the performer's own on the screen.

The introduction of theatricality into music through lighting, movement, text, props, costumes, a more effective use of the space within the hall, and other elements which, at first glance, might be more associated with other artistic disciplines, can be a very powerful tool in the creative hands of the music community. I believe that this dialogue of music with other arts contributes to offering our audiences original and fresh ways of listening to music—music that also demands to be looked at.

And if it comes to broadening the range of experiences available in the format of a traditional concert, what could be better than using as a concert venue the whole space of the Helsinki Design Museum while hosting the retrospective exhibition of the work of Finnish designer Timo Sarpaneva (1926–2006), so the listener—and in this case, also viewer—can move around freely? That is the environment in which the fifth premiere of my doctoral concert series (15 September 2018) was developed.

10.2 *The Process of Becoming*, for bass clarinet, choir, electronics and sound installation, by Josué Moreno (2018)

Josué Moreno (b. 1980) is the only composer who appeared more than once in my series of five concerts, but that was not an accidental decision. In fact, this second commission from him was deeply rooted in our first collaboration back in 2012, when I premiered his *IN-AUDITO* for bass clarinet and live electronics (see chapter 6.2). His approach to music-making and the act of listening, as well as the very distinct ideas he practices, were once again very suitable in guaranteeing the success of such a project.

IN-AUDITO was the culmination of several months of working together. Many elements that we explored during the composition process did not appear in the final version of the piece, leaving several questions open to further development. As we thought that a logical extension for the embouchure techniques that we were exploring was the human voice, bass clarinet and choir seemed the natural realm for such explorations. *IN-AUDITO* had a great deal of music spatiality explorations that somehow were pointing to what the composer would later call 'aural weather', a concept that, according to Moreno (2022, 83), "points towards a different way of organising sounds, placing them in space instead of time, fostering a more landscape-like listening experience in which the audience becomes responsible for the temporal narrative by exercising their agency".[68]

This new collaborative project, called *The Process of Becoming*, consisted of two parts: a sound installation and a live performance.

[68] John Cage (1990) already used the metaphor of weather to refer to music in his *Autobiographical Statement*, stating that he "was to move from structure to process, from music as an object having parts, to music without beginning, middle, or end, music as weather".

The sound installation had started playing six months before the premiere of the live performance took place, at the beginning of the Timo Sarpaneva retrospective exhibition in the Helsinki Design Museum on 23 March 2018. It consisted of 12 audio transducers attached to the wooden platform that supports the *Ahtojää* (*Pack Ice*) glass installation (see Figure 32) placed in the main space of the museum, with some of the sounds and processes used in *IN-AUDITO* also present in that installation. From the opening, it evolved until the live concert on 15 September 2018, with which it was in constant interaction. After the concert, it also stayed until the end of the exhibition for one more week, as a resonance attached to the objects that witnessed the live performance.

The live performance was a promenade 'concerto' for bass clarinet, choir, electronics and sound installation in six movements, in which the performers were guiding the audience through the different spaces of the museum, under the idea of the *tableau vivant*:

I. Intro: The opening was a sort of initiation rite in the form of an improvised cadenza for the bass clarinet. With the only instruction of climbing up through the harmonic series of a low A, this improvisation was echoed by the repetitive patterns and sustained sonorities of the choir as a resonance and extension of the bass clarinet sound.

II. Responsorio: *Attacca* from the first movement, the next section outlined a different spatial situation of the performers, benefiting from the layout of the museum's first floor (see Figures 27 and 28). As the title suggests, plain melodic patterns were presented responsorially—i.e. by alternating soloist and choir. On the background, the sonic landscape evolved between the sounds of portable loudspeakers and some other sound emitting objects, such as plastic pipes, carried by the singers.

Figure 27: *II. Responsorio* of Moreno's *The Process of Becoming*. Bass clarinet soloist performing on the left-side staircase, opposite to the choir.

Figure 28: *II. Responsorio* of Moreno's *The Process of Becoming*. Choir performing on the right-side staircase, opposite to the bass clarinet soloist.

III. Becoming: The third movement is the first one that took place in the actual exhibition space, as the previous two happened in between the entrance hall of the first floor and the stairs leading to the second. This time, the bass clarinet solo, only four singers and live electronics interacted with a three-screen video projection that showed how the objects presented in the room were made (see Figure 29). Key clicks, airy sounds and different kinds of vocalisations were key elements to mix the musical material with the image and sound of the glassblowers at work.

Figure 29: *III. Becoming* of Moreno's *The Process of Becoming*.

IV. Ambiente Chorale: In this movement, the composer placed the choir around the colourful textile works of the *Ambiente* series that Sarpaneva designed in 1965 after having developed a new printing technique (see Figure 30). With this technique, which allowed fabrics to be printed in rotary printing presses, the designer created a particularly rich colour chart of hundreds of hues that he used with careful consideration in his strip and colour field patterns, with the resulting feature that there would never be two equal pieces. In the same way, each design of the music that Moreno envisioned for this chorale was never repeated in the same fashion, but changed the speed, articulation, sound production technique, or even the octave in which the musical material had to be sung. The choir performed this movement on the opposite side to where the sound installation was located, allowing the audience to balance between both sonic situations according to their position within the exhibition space.

Figure 30: *IV. Ambiente Chorale* of Moreno's *The Process of Becoming*.

V. Murano Superellipse: Inspired by the fragile beauty of the sculptures that Sarpaneva fashioned in the Italian island of Murano, legendary for its glassmaking, the music of this movement paralleled the monolithic delicacy of those fascinating glass designs (see Figure 31). *Murano Superellipse* is a bass clarinet monologue consisting of short melodic bursts that are repeated several times before moving to the next one. As usual in Moreno's music, the freedom and autonomy of the performer had an important role here. Winking at *IN-AUDITO* with the same *tempo* marking of quaver equalling 40–120 approx. (see Figure 9), Moreno makes a very similar invitation for the bass clarinettist to really immerse themselves into the music and develop very active listening while performing in order to make decisions during the course of the piece. The *pp possibile sempre* on which the whole movement is constructed and an electronic texture that reacts very gently to each musical gesture of the bass clarinet contributed to the delicate atmosphere of the room, so striking to the visitors' eyes immediately after entering that space.

Figure 31: *V. Murano Superellipse* of Moreno's *The Process of Becoming*.

VI. Ceremonial 28: The promenade performance and the stationary installation finally met in this last movement with the performance of repetitive patterns while the performers circulated around the installation (see Figure 32). To conclude, the sounds of the live concert dissolved around the space letting only its sonic trace resonate through the 210 ice-like glass formations of *Ahtojää*.

Figure 32: *VI. Ceremonial 28* of Moreno's *The Process of Becoming*.

This project was clearly designed as a site-specific work, although it could be perhaps adapted to other similar public spaces. However, from the six movements of which it is composed, the only one that would work as a separate piece on its own, outside of the context provided by the other movements and the space for which it was originally conceived, is the fifth one: *Murano Superellipse*.

10.3 Finnish music for bass clarinet involving other artistic disciplines

The combination of architecture and design with music in Moreno's work is not the only case in which this dialogue between music and other artistic disciplines takes place in the Finnish bass clarinet repertoire, although this situation can happen at many different levels. The movements of Tiensuu's *Asteletsa*, the "explicit psychological theatre" (Wilson 2021) of Dumistrescu's *Pas de deux'n keskustelu matkalla kotiin*, the opening and ending in Hietala's *Last Two Lamantines*, the triangle stroke in Hakola's *Capriole* and all the extra 'percussion instruments' and subsequent movements in Lindberg's early pieces from the 1980s, the heel-tremolos that Suilamo requires for his *YELL - le Cri de Merlin?*, Trbojević's wish for as dark a hall as possible with only 'phantom' lights on the bass clarinettist for her *Le Fantôme Du Vent*, and the vocal extravaganzas of Dumitrescu's *Necklace*, are just some examples. Besides these, there are a couple of works that could have been included in some of the previous chapters, but I finally preferred to keep for a separate section. My reason for making this distinction is that, as in Moreno's *The Process of Becoming*, the very act of performing these pieces requires another 'agent' to contribute with another artistic impulse to the music performed by the bass clarinettist in order to make the piece complete. Nevertheless, they are not exactly the same case as *The Process of Becoming*, in which the composer wrote the piece thinking of combining his music with an already existing art work—Timo Sarpaneva's and the museum itself—to create a final artistic product which joins both creative forces. On the other hand, the composers of the two pieces I will mention in this chapter created their works without other pre-existing art works in mind, but with the intention of writing a piece of music that would involve something other than just music.

Kaarre II for clarinettist, dancer and live electronics was written by **Veli-Matti Puumala** (b. 1965) in 1993—the same year as he finished his composition studies at the Sibelius Academy under Paavo Heininen.[69] It was premiered as part of Puumala's composer portrait concert during the *Helsinki Biennale* of that year, and since then, it had not been performed again until I decided to include it in the last concert of my doctoral series in 2021. If we take into account the quality of the music and the interest this kind of work could nowadays draw from other

[69] Four years earlier, in 1989, Puumala had already completed *Kaarre*, a shorter and more immature piece, although not at all without interest, on which *Kaarre II* is clearly grounded. *Kaarre* is scored for clarinettist and dancer, but without electronics, and shares a more balanced weight between clarinet and bass clarinet than *Kaarre II*, where the use of the bass clarinet is much more prominent.

performers, it is hard to explain why it took it almost 30 years to return to the stage. There are, however, other elements that might justify that long period of time without being played again, such as the outdated technology employed in the live electronics and the lack of any choreographic notation for the dancer. For me, reconstructing this piece was a fascinating process, but I could not have done it alone.

First, we had the task of adapting the original electronics to modern equipment, for which I had the invaluable help of Alejandro Olarte, lecturer in electroacoustic music at the Sibelius Academy Centre for Music & Technology. Alejandro performed a digital transfer from a DAT tape containing the various samples which are triggered at intervals throughout the piece.[70] It was also necessary to recreate the effects which the composer had applied to the sounds for different sections of the piece: several types of reverb, delays and transpositions of what the clarinettist had to play live. We had access to a fully-functioning Lexicon LXP-15—the legendary multi-effects processor used for the first performance—but the numbering of the effects in the score did not correspond to the unit's presets.[71] This was probably because the presets had been changed or renamed when preparing for the premiere. The original Lexicon effects were therefore recreated using the Max MSP program. This was achieved by following the descriptions on the score, the actual sounds of a cassette tape recording of the premiere and ultimately, working under the supervision of the composer himself. As a result, we have given the piece a much greater longevity and future-proofed it, making it available and easier to perform for other clarinettists. This was always one of my goals when undertaking the *Kaarre II* project.

Second, there was the dancer's choreography which had originally been created by Maria Hupponen. Unable to discover the choreographer's current whereabouts, the only source available to us was a VHS videotaped recording of the premiere. For our new performance, multitalented artist Jacintha Damström put all of her stage experience at the service of creating

[70] All of them are created from different clarinet and bass clarinet sounds that were recorded at the time by Heikki Nikula, who premiered the piece.

[71] Both the studio history and the patch names mentioned in the score referred to a Lexicon LXP-15 as being the sound processing unit used in the premiere.

a new choreography based on the original one, meanwhile enriching it with a fresh and contemporary twist by adding some other elements.[72]

As for the music itself, the piece evolves as an intricate and complex entity, full of nuance and rich textural changes. Extreme and rapid changes of register, dynamics, and character charge the music with vibrating energy and an intense level of excitement, which only winds down in the final section—marked *tranquillo*, as opposed to the initial *nervoso*. Although still displaying some furious and agitated outbursts, this final coda, in which the performer returns to the bass clarinet after employing the clarinet, brings the music down to earth in an attempt to dissipate the pulsating sense of movement that has earlier been present throughout. One of the purely musical challenges for the clarinettist when performing this piece, which can also be taken into account when making the choreography with the dancer, is to deliver a solid and compact dramaturgical curve that maintains the tension, out of the many snippets in which the piece is apparently divided.

The second piece I have included in this chapter of Finnish bass clarinet music involving other arts is ***Everyday Etudes No.1: Garden***, for sound file, bass clarinettist and object player with gardening tools (2015), by **Ville Raasakka** (b. 1977). As Raasakka (2021) acknowledges himself, he is not a composer of sonatas or symphonies, but rather concentrates on the processes the sounds have in themselves. He normally records those sounds directly from the field and develops them into an entire piece of music that can vividly evoke a place or situation on the concert stage, very often with highly imaginative results—as is the case in *Garden*.

'Material ecology' is a concept that has guided Raasakka's work as a composer across the years, which is why, with each of his works, he raises a variety of environmental issues for the audience to reflect upon, or simply to evoke further interest or curiosity. Some examples are his *Hypermarket and hypercommodity* for shopping items, piano and chamber orchestra (2015), which highlights the topic of consumerism; or his most recent orchestral work *Black cloud, under ground* (2018), inspired by the coalmine fire tragedy in the town of Centralia in Pennsylvania. Nevertheless, while he is personally willing to adopt social responsibility, he refuses to preach:

[72] Besides her passion for classical music as a flutist, some of Damstöm's other artistic strengths include singing, dance, improvisational theatre and circus.

> "Everyone does things in their own way and as their personality dictates. My aim is to make people think and talk" (Isolammi 2017).

Garden is the first of the *Everyday Etudes* series which, as suggested by the title, aims to present listeners with commonplace, day-to-day activities.[73] In this particular piece, Raasakka brings the soundscape of an urban garden into the concert hall with recognisable sonic objects such as birds, a barking dog, bus doors, a tram riding its tracks, a cat, the buzz of a bee, and other garden-related sounds like a shovel digging into the soil, secateurs snipping at flower stems, water pouring, etc. The composer makes the bass clarinet interact with these sounds, sometimes imitating them (as if 'instrumentalising' the sound file), sometimes with a more independent line, but always creating a colourful partnership. In addition, to draw the two elements even closer, Raasakka asks for a mediating musician equipped with all kinds of gardening tools, flowers to water, pots with soil, seeds to plant, grass, etc., the sounds of which are amplified and mixed with the electronics and the bass clarinet sounds, all being gathered together in the same space. This turns the piece into a work of performance art that recreates a garden on stage, not only aurally but also physically.

10.4 Finnish concertante music for bass clarinet

The Process of Becoming cannot be considered a concerto in the traditional sense of the word and, therefore, this concept must be used, if at all, with the same open attitude in which the whole project was conceived and should be looked at. Nonetheless, and since it opposes a solo instrument to a collective group of musicians (singers, in this case), this is probably the most appropriate place of the thesis to make a short reference to bass clarinet concertante music in Finland.

On one hand, we can find single-movement pieces for bass clarinet solo and small chamber ensembles, such as ***Sade avaa*** (rain opens) with an ensemble of flute, cor anglais, bassoon, French horn, percussion, violin, viola, cello and double bass (1999), and ***Kuule II*** (translated as the imperative of the verb 'to hear') with another ten-piece ensemble of wind and string quintets (2007), both by **Lotta Wennäkoski** (b. 1970).

[73] Other pieces in the series are *Everyday Etudes No. 2: Wash*, for guitar, cosmetic products and electronics (2016); and *Everyday Etudes No. 3: Fireplace*, for cello, firewood and electronics (2021).

On the other hand, the combination with a symphony orchestra in the form of more traditional concertos has been also explored in Finland by **Harri Vuori** (b. 1957) in his ***Concerto*** (2001), **Adina Dumitrescu** (b. 1964) in her ***As they met me*** (2014) and, more recently, by **Kalevi Aho** (b. 1949) with another ***Concerto*** from 2018.

In between opposing the bass clarinet to small ensembles and to big symphony orchestras, we can find other examples, such as **Kai Nieminen**'s (b. 1953) ***Dance Hobgoblin*** with strings (1998); **Eero Hämeenniemi**'s (b. 1951) Indian Carnatic influences of ***The snake in the rope*** (2000), where the composer adds a flute, a clarinet, a bassoon and a French horn to the string section, and provides ample improvising opportunities both for the soloist and for the whole orchestra; and **Sampo Haapamäki**'s (b. 1979) ***Kirjo*** (spectrum), from 2006, featuring an ensemble of 26 musicians (two flutes, two oboes, one clarinet, one alto saxophone, two bassoons, two French horns, one trumpet, one trombone, percussion, and a fixed string section of 2-2-3-4-2).[74] Other more unconventional approaches are those taken by **Markus Fagerudd** (b. 1961), who employed a clarinet ensemble (two E-flat clarinets, B-flat clarinet, A clarinet, bass clarinet and contrabass clarinet) as a counterpart for the bass clarinet solo in ***The Carousel*** (2001); and **Jouni Kesti** (1946–2015) and his markedly jazz-influenced ***Concerto*** (2013).[75]

Timo Hietala (b. 1960) is the composer who has made so far the biggest contribution in this field, with three very different concertos, each of them somehow fitting into one of the previously mentioned groups of pieces:

- ***Viluinen Pingviini*** (cold penguin), from 1992, was written for a large symphony orchestra, although the composer later made a reduced version.[76]
- ***Lunnin Tango*** (1998) is scored for a chamber orchestra of strings plus a woodwind quintet.
- ***HIP*** (2013) takes advantage of a very particular combination of musicians to bring on funky and rock-inspired textures—adding an electric bass, a drum set, two more

[74] The third movement seems to be the starting point of the very personal quarter-tone based language that has already become the hallmark of Haapamäki's compositional style.

[75] Although it was originally written for bass clarinet and orchestra, the only time that the piece has been performed was under a different format. This happened at the memorial concert after the composer's passing, with Heikki Nikula playing the bass clarinet part, and composer Markus Fagerudd and sound designer Juhani Liimatainen improvising on the piano and the live electronics, respectively (Nikula 2021).

[76] Connecting this piece with previous sections of this chapter, it is pertinent to mention that Hietala includes some extra-musical elements through the wardrobe, asking the soloist to wear a penguin costume and the principal trombone to dress up as Neptune, and taking both players to the front for an improvised 'discussion', as the piece is based on Disney's animation tale *The Cold-Blooded Penguin* (1945).

percussion sections with a great variety of instruments, and the vintage Rhodes piano and Hammond organ, to the more traditional string quintet, flute, clarinet, trumpet, bass trombone and tuba.

11 CONCLUSIONS

The two main focal points of this thesis are the bass clarinet and Finnish music—both of which have experienced a very particular evolution if compared with other instruments in the case of the bass clarinet, and with other European cultures when talking about Finnish music. Indeed, it is even possible to draw a rough parallelism in their development. If we think about the bass clarinet, it really took its time to take off, but during the second half of the twentieth century it has gradually emerged as a powerful instrumental voice in contemporary music that composers have embraced for their needs to express new ideas. In a similar way, Finnish music can also be described as young in comparison with that of other European countries, being rather marginal in some of its early stages, but enjoying a phenomenal health at the moment.[77]

In my opinion, the combination of these two relatively young phenomena, which are already very interesting topics on their own, could only give rise to another fresh subject, and that is the idea I have always tried to transmit with this overview on Finnish bass clarinet music. Hopefully, it helped to uncover an important number of works that were probably unknown outside Finland, as well as an interesting list of composers, from many different generations, and with a great diversity of styles and approaches towards the bass clarinet.

Narrowing the focus of the reviewed repertoire only to solos and duos responded to a question of manageability. I am sure some readers would have preferred a more thorough description and analysis of concertante music, as it has been done with the rest of the pieces discussed, but this would have made the size of the thesis grow significantly. Furthermore, since concertos were never in my scope when designing my doctoral concert series, I preferred to make just a brief introduction this time, with the hope of discussing the topic more in detail in a separate article in the future.

As mentioned, this thesis is constructed on five personal commissions, which were also of central importance in my doctoral concert series. Personally, the next logical step, following

[77] "Finland remained a musical backwater not only through the Middle Ages, but well into the Renaissance and Baroque eras too. […] Romanticism never achieved such profundity in Finland as can be found in the demonic depths of Berlioz and Liszt, for instance. Typical genres of the era such as opera and large orchestral works remained all but untouched until the final years of the 19th century. […] The first substantial Finnish symphony [by Ernst Mielck (1877–1899)] was completed in 1897—two years before Sibelius's First" (Korhonen 2003, 11, 22–24).

the commission, the premiere and other subsequent performances, and the writing about them in this thesis, is making a recording, which is already underway. I believe that this recording will help these works to get even more visibility, receive future performances by other artists and gradually find their place in the twenty-first century bass clarinet repertoire.

'Commission' and 'premiere' are concepts that I have used repeatedly throughout this thesis. While I consider commissioning new pieces to be a responsibility for performers, I believe it is equally important to take care of what happens with those commissions after being premiered, and to put emphasis also on the possibility of doing second, third and successive performances of the same piece. This is a goal I set not only for my 'own' commissions, but for many other interesting works I mention in this thesis. The reconstruction of Veli-Matti Puumala's *Kaarre II*, for clarinettist, dancer and live electronics (1993), reported in chapter 10.3, is a very obvious example. But there are others, such as *Echos colorés* for bass clarinet and piano (1991) by Olli Koskelin, who welcome with enthusiasm my proposal of collaborating to update the manuscript score. *Echos colorés* was largely improvised at the time of the premiere, and the only copy of the score is lost at the moment, so we have decided to work on a 'new' version of it. This will allow the piece to be 'back in the market' and available for other interested performers. Like many other works that have been mentioned in the preceding pages and that have not been performed a lot in recent times, I have no doubt it deserves to get a 'second life' years after it was composed.

These conclusions bring to an end many years of work on a project that has pushed my boundaries as a performer and challenged me in multiple ways but which, at the same time, has been enormously rewarding. I believe in the value of the music I am discussing in this thesis and its significance to the field of contemporary music and, consequently, to the bass clarinet repertoire. I just hope I have been able to transmit part of the excitement I felt during the creative process I went through when working with all this music, and that this thesis will serve to raise awareness of the bass clarinet and its repertoire as a solo instrument, inspiring performers, composers, listeners and any bass clarinet enthusiast who would like to expand their knowledge about it with music coming from Finland.

APPENDIX 1: List of Finnish bass clarinet music. By chronological order

1940—Rajula, Matti: *Mesikämmen* (bass clarinet and piano).

1951—Ringbom, Nils-Eric: *Sestetto* (oboe, cor anglais, clarinet, bass clarinet, bassoon and French horn).

1959—Hannikainen, Väinö: *Pilvinen Päivä* (bass clarinet and piano).

1977/1978—Segerstam, Leif: *Epitaph No.2d* (bass clarinet and piano).

1981—Marttinen, Tauno: *Maahinen* op. 198 (solo bass clarinet).

1981—Rechberger, Herman: *Szene am…* (bass clarinet and piano).

1982—Lindberg, Magnus: *Action-Situation-Signification* (bass clarinettist, pianist, percussionist, cellist and tape).

1982—Rechberger, Herman: *Sirba* (three clarinets, bass clarinet and tape).

1983—Marttinen, Tauno: *Duo* op. 220 (bass clarinet and marimba).

1983—Marttinen, Tauno: *October* op. 227 (bass clarinet and accordion).

1983—Rechberger, Herman: *All'ongharese* (bass clarinet and percussion).

1983—Sermilä, Jarmo: *Clockwork Etudes* (bass clarinet and marimba/vibraphone).

1984—Kaipainen, Jouni: *Piping Down the Valleys Wild* op. 26 (bass clarinet and piano).

1985—Marttinen, Tauno: *Metamorfos* op. 245 (bass clarinet and marimba).

1983–1985—Lindberg, Magnus: *Kraft* (clarinettist, cellist, pianist, two percussionists, live electronics and orchestra).

1985—Marttinen, Tauno: *Palava Pensas* op. 253 (solo bass clarinet).

1986—Lindberg, Magnus: *Ur* (clarinet/bass clarinet, violin, cello, double bass, piano/synthesiser and live electronics).

1987—Suilamo, Harri: *Yell - le Cri de Merlin* (solo bass clarinet).

1989—Puumala, Veli-Matti: *Kaarre* (dancer and clarinettist).

1990—Fagerudd, Markus: *Ingrepp I* (bass clarinet and piano).

1990—Saariaho, Kaija: *Oi Kuu* (bass clarinet and cello).

1991—Hakola, Kimmo: *Capriole* (bass clarinet and cello).

1991—Koskelin, Olli: *Echos colorés* (bass clarinet and piano).

1991—Länsiö, Tapani: *A Due* (bass clarinet and cello).

1991—Nieminen, Kai: *The Mist Hobgoblin* (solo bass clarinet).

1991—Trbojević, Jovanka: *...kada bih mog'o drag...* (mezzo-soprano, bass clarinet, double bass and percussion).

1992—Hietala, Timo: *Viluinen Pingviini* (bass clarinet and orchestra).

1993/1995—Puumala, Veli-Matti: *Basfortel* (bass clarinet, piano/Midi keyboard and live electronics).

1993—Puumala, Veli-Matti: *Kaarre II* (dancer, clarinettist and live electronics).

1993—Sermilä, Jarmo: *Danza 4B* (oboe and bass clarinet).

1994—Kervinen, Mikko: *John Dowland-transcriptions* (voice and bass clarinet).

1994—Pohjannoro, Hannu: *saari, rannaton* (bass clarinet and tape).

1995—Hietala, Timo: *Strutsi* (bass clarinet, 2 percussion players and live electronics).

1995—Hämeenniemi, Eero: *Distant cousins* (bass clarinet and didgeridoo).

1995—Hämeenniemi, Eero: *Duaali* (bass clarinet and piano).

1995—Sermilä, Jarmo: *Mechanical Partnership* (bass clarinet and accordion).

1996—Lintinen, Kirmo: *Faabeli* (flute, bass clarinet, guitar and percussion).

1997—Lintinen, Kirmo: *Oikku* (bass clarinet and piano).

1991/1997—Tiensuu, Jukka: *Plus IIb* (bass clarinet and cello).

1978/1998—Heininen, Paavo: *Gymel* (bass clarinet and tape).

1998—Hietala, Timo: *Last Two Lamantines* (two bass clarinets).

1998—Hietala, Timo: *Lunnin Tango* (bass clarinet and chamber orchestra).

1998—Nieminen, Kai: *Dance Hobgoblin* (bass clarinet and string orchestra).

1999—Länsiö, Tapani: *SonoS* (two bass clarinets).

1999—Tiensuu, Jukka: *Asteletsa* (solo bass clarinet).

1999—Trbojević, Jovanka: *Le Fantôme Du Vent* (bass clarinet, tape and live electronics).

1999—Wennäkoski, Lotta: *Sade avaa* (bass clarinet and ensemble).

2000—Hämeenniemi, Eero: *The snake in the rope* (bass clarinet and orchestra).

2000—Vuori, Harri: *Galdr* (bass clarinet and French horn).

2001—Fagerudd, Markus: *The Carousel* (bass clarinet and clarinet ensemble).

2001—Kerko, Harri: *...aistin...* (six bass clarinets).

2001—Vuori, Harri: *Concerto* (bass clarinet and orchestra).

2002—Kuitunen, Kimmo: *Crest, trough and scrolling nodes* (bass clarinet and cello).

2002—Lintinen, Kirmo: *Abrakadabra* (flute, bass clarinet, guitar and percussion).

2002—Wennäkoski, Lotta: *Limn* (solo bass clarinet).

2003—Hietala, Timo: *Musta sydän yhtä punainen kuin valkoinen* (solo bass clarinet).

2005—Hyvärinen, Asta: *After trace* (bass clarinet and marimba).

2005—Judin, Petri: *Rotation IV* (bass clarinet and piano).

2005—Talvitie, Riikka: *Seireenietydi* (soprano, bass clarinet and live electronics).

2006—Haapamäki, Sampo: *Kirjo* (bass clarinet and orchestra).

2006—Hakola, Kimmo: *Virkku* (solo bass clarinet).

2007—Auvinen, Antti: *Karkija* (bass clarinet and marimba).

2007—Dumitrescu, Adina: *Pas de deux'n keskustelu matkalla kotiin* (bass clarinet and kantele).

2007—Rechberger, Herman: *Cranes in company* (bass clarinet and piano).

2007—Wennäkoski, Lotta: *Kuule II* (bass clarinet and ensemble).

2008/2015—Supponen, Lauri: *King of Spades* (two bass clarinets).

2001–2008—Wennäkoski, Lotta: *Children Songs* (tenor and bass clarinet).

2008—Wennäkoski, Lotta: *Andas* (two bass clarinets).

2008—Wennäkoski, Lotta: *Suka* (flute, oboe, clarinet, French horn, bassoon and bass clarinet).

2001/2009—Nuorvala, Juhani: *Concertino* (bass clarinet and tape).

2009—Talvitie, Riikka: *Broken Lullaby* (clarinet and bass clarinet).

2010—Dumitrescu, Adina: *Remember Anton Pann* (E-flat clarinet and bass clarinet).

2010—Muro, Juan Antonio: *Au-dessus des nuages* (flute, oboe, bass clarinet and guitar).

2011—Dumitrescu, Adina: *Necklace* (solo bass clarinet).

2012—Judin, Petri: *Prelude grotesque* (two bass clarinets).

2012—Moreno, Josué: *IN-AUDITO* (bass clarinet and live electronics).

2012—Zinovjev, Sauli: *Runo Runosta* (soprano, bass clarinet and guitar).

2013—Fagerudd, Markus: *Bluesoresques* (bass clarinet and guitar).

2013—Hietala, Timo: *HIP Concerto* (bass clarinet and chamber orchestra).

2013—Kesti, Jouni: *Concerto* (bass clarinet).

2013—Whittall, Matthew: *A fragile peace* (bass clarinet, two scordatura guitars—one player—and live electronics/fixed media).

2014—Dumitrescu, Adina: *As they met me* (bass clarinet and orchestra).

2015—Raasakka, Ville: *Garden* (sound file, bass clarinettist and object player with gardening tools).

2016—Hassinen, Mikko: *Raqs* (bass clarinet and tombak).

2017—Supponen, Lauri: *Eau & Gaz à tous les étages* (solo bass clarinet).

2018—Aho, Kalevi: *Concerto* (bass clarinet and orchestra).

2018—Autio, Kalle: *The Great Rodeo Fragments* (four bass clarinets).

2018/2020—Hynninen, Maija: *Glow within* (flute and bass clarinet).

2018—Moreno, Josué: *The Process of Becoming* (bass clarinet, choir, electronics and sound installation).

2018—Talvitie, Riikka: *Heinä* (bass clarinet, pre-recorded voice, video and live electronics).

2018—Wennäkoski, Lotta: *Rumbo* (six bass clarinets).

2019—Heininen, Paavo: *Sonata* op. 147 (bass clarinet and piano).

2020—Koskelin, Olli: *Animal II* (solo bass clarinet).

2021—Wennäkoski, Lotta: *Rimbalzi* (bass clarinet and percussion).

APPENDIX 2: List of Finnish bass clarinet music. By composer

Aho, Kalevi: *Concerto* (bass clarinet and orchestra)—2018.

Autio, Kalle: *The Great Rodeo Fragments* (four bass clarinets)—2018.

Auvinen, Antti: *Karkija* (bass clarinet and marimba)—2007.

Dumitrescu, Adina: *Pas de deux'n keskustelu matkalla kotiin* (bass clarinet and kantele)—2007.

Dumitrescu, Adina: *Remember Anton Pann* (E-flat clarinet and bass clarinet)—2010.

Dumitrescu, Adina: *Necklace* (solo bass clarinet)—2011.

Dumitrescu, Adina: *As they met me* (bass clarinet and orchestra)—2014.

Fagerudd, Markus: *Ingrepp I* (bass clarinet and piano)—1990.

Fagerudd, Markus: *The Carousel* (bass clarinet and clarinet ensemble)—2001.

Fagerudd, Markus: *Bluesoresques* (bass clarinet and guitar)—2013.

Haapamäki, Sampo: *Kirjo* (bass clarinet and orchestra)—2006.

Hakola, Kimmo: *Capriole* (bass clarinet and cello)—1991.

Hakola, Kimmo: *Virkku* (solo bass clarinet)—2006.

Hannikainen, Väinö: *Pilvinen Päivä* (bass clarinet and piano)—1959.

Hassinen, Mikko: *Raqs* (bass clarinet and tombak)—2016.

Heininen, Paavo: *Gymel* (bass clarinet and tape)—1978/1998.

Heininen, Paavo: *Sonata* op. 147 (bass clarinet and piano)—2019.

Hietala, Timo: *Viluinen Pingviini* (bass clarinet and orchestra)—1992.

Hietala, Timo: *Strutsi* (bass clarinet, 2 percussion players and live electronics)—1995.

Hietala, Timo: *Last Two Lamantines* (two bass clarinets)—1998.

Hietala, Timo: *Lunnin Tango* (bass clarinet and chamber orchestra)—1998.

Hietala, Timo: *Musta sydän yhtä punainen kuin valkoinen* (solo bass clarinet)—2003.

Hietala, Timo: *HIP Concerto* (bass clarinet and chamber orchestra)—2013.

Hynninen, Maija: *Glow within* (flute and bass clarinet)—2018/2020.

Hyvärinen, Asta: *After trace* (bass clarinet and marimba)—2005.

Hämeenniemi, Eero: *Distant cousins* (bass clarinet and didgeridoo)—1995.

Hämeenniemi, Eero: *Duaali* (bass clarinet and piano)—1995.

Hämeenniemi, Eero: *The snake in the rope* (bass clarinet and orchestra)—2000.

Judin, Petri: *Rotation IV* (bass clarinet and piano)—2005.

Judin, Petri: *Prelude grotesque* (two bass clarinets)—2012.

Kaipainen, Jouni: *Piping Down the Walleys Wild* op. 26 (bass clarinet and piano)—1984.

Kerko, Harri: *...aistin...* (six bass clarinets)—2001.

Kervinen, Mikko: *John Dowland-transcriptions* (voice and bass clarinet)—1994.

Kesti, Jouni: *Concerto* (bass clarinet)—2013.

Koskelin, Olli: *Echos colorés* (bass clarinet and piano)—1991.

Koskelin, Olli: *Animal II* (solo bass clarinet)—2020.

Kuitunen, Kimmo: *Crest, trough and scrolling nodes* (bass clarinet and cello)—2002.

Lindberg, Magnus: *Action-Situation-Signification* (bass clarinettist, pianist, percussionist, cellist and tape)—1982.

Lindberg, Magnus: *Kraft* (clarinettist, cellist, pianist, two percussionists, live electronics and orchestra)—1983–1985.

Lindberg, Magnus: *Ur* (clarinet/bass clarinet, violin, cello, double bass, piano/synthesiser and live electronics)—1986.

Lintinen, Kirmo: *Faabeli* (flute, bass clarinet, guitar and percussion)—1996.

Lintinen, Kirmo: *Oikku* (bass clarinet and piano)—1997.

Lintinen, Kirmo: *Abrakadabra* (flute, bass clarinet, guitar and percussion)—2002.

Länsiö, Tapani: *A Due* (bass clarinet and cello)—1991.

Länsiö, Tapani: *SonoS* (two bass clarinets)—1999.

Marttinen, Tauno: *Maahinen* op. 198 (solo bass clarinet)—1981.

Marttinen, Tauno: *Duo* op. 220 (bass clarinet and marimba)—1983.

Marttinen, Tauno: *October* op. 227 (bass clarinet and accordion)—1983.

Marttinen, Tauno: *Metamorfos* op. 245 (bass clarinet and marimba)—1985.

Marttinen, Tauno: *Palava Pensas* op. 253 (solo bass clarinet)—1985.

Moreno, Josué: *IN-AUDITO* (bass clarinet and live electronics)—2012.

Moreno, Josué: *The Process of Becoming* (bass clarinet, choir, electronics and sound installation)—2018.

Muro, Juan Antonio: *Au-dessus des nuages* (flute, oboe, bass clarinet and guitar)—2010.

Nieminen, Kai: *The Mist Hobgoblin* (solo bass clarinet)—1991.

Nieminen, Kai: *Dance Hobgoblin* (bass clarinet and string orchestra)—1998.

Nuorvala, Juhani: *Concertino* (bass clarinet and tape)—2001/2009.

Pohjannoro, Hannu: *saari, rannaton* (bass clarinet and tape)—1994.

Puumala, Veli-Matti: *Kaarre* (dancer and clarinettist)—1989.

Puumala, Veli-Matti: *Kaarre II* (dancer, clarinettist and live electronics)—1993.

Puumala, Veli-Matti: *Basfortel* (bass clarinet, piano/Midi keyboard and live electronics)—1993/1995.

Raasakka, Ville: *Garden* (sound file, bass clarinettist and object player with gardening tools)—2015.

Rajula, Matti: *Mesikämmen* (bass clarinet and piano)—1940.

Rechberger, Herman: *Szene am…* (bass clarinet and piano)—1981.

Rechberger, Herman: *Sirba* (three clarinets, bass clarinet and tape)—1982.

Rechberger, Herman: *All'ongharese* (bass clarinet and percussion)—1983.

Rechberger, Herman: *Cranes in company* (bass clarinet and piano)—2007.

Ringbom, Nils-Eric: *Sestetto* (oboe, cor anglais, clarinet, bass clarinet, bassoon and French horn)—1951.

Saariaho, Kaija: *Oi Kuu* (bass clarinet and cello)—1990.

Segerstam, Leif: *Epitaph No.2d* (bass clarinet and piano)—1977/1978.

Sermilä, Jarmo: *Clockwork Etudes* (bass clarinet and marimba/vibraphone)—1983.

Sermilä, Jarmo: *Danza 4B* (oboe and bass clarinet)—1993.

Sermilä, Jarmo: *Mechanical Partnership* (bass clarinet and accordion)—1995.

Suilamo, Harri: *Yell - le Cri de Merlin* (solo bass clarinet)—1987.

Supponen, Lauri: *King of Spades* (two bass clarinets)—2008/2015.

Supponen, Lauri: *Eau & Gaz à tous les étages* (solo bass clarinet)—2017.

Talvitie, Riikka: *Seireenietydi* (soprano, bass clarinet and live electronics)—2005.

Talvitie, Riikka: *Broken Lullaby* (clarinet and bass clarinet)—2009.

Talvitie, Riikka: *Heinä* (bass clarinet, pre-recorded voice, video and live electronics)—2018.

Tiensuu, Jukka: *Plus IIb* (bass clarinet and cello)—1991/1997.

Tiensuu, Jukka: *Asteletsa* (solo bass clarinet)—1999.

Trbojević, Jovanka: *...kada bih mog'o drag...* (mezzo-soprano, bass clarinet, double bass and percussion)—1991.

Trbojević, Jovanka: *Le Fantôme Du Vent* (bass clarinet, tape and live electronics)—1999.

Vuori, Harri: *Galdr* (bass clarinet and French horn)—2000.

Vuori, Harri: *Concerto* (bass clarinet and orchestra)—2001.

Wennäkoski, Lotta: *Sade avaa* (bass clarinet and ensemble)—1999.

Wennäkoski, Lotta: *Limn* (solo bass clarinet)—2002.

Wennäkoski, Lotta: *Kuule II* (bass clarinet and ensemble)—2007.

Wennäkoski, Lotta: *Children Songs* (tenor and bass clarinet)—2001–2008.

Wennäkoski, Lotta: *Andas* (two bass clarinets)—2008.

Wennäkoski, Lotta: *Suka* (flute, oboe, clarinet, French horn, bassoon and bass clarinet)—2008.

Wennäkoski, Lotta: *Rumbo* (six bass clarinets)—2018.

Wennäkoski, Lotta: *Rimbalzi* (bass clarinet and percussion)—2021.

Whittall, Matthew: *A fragile peace* (bass clarinet, two scordatura guitars—one player—and live electronics/fixed media)—2013.

Zinovjev, Sauli: *Runo Runosta* (soprano, bass clarinet and guitar)—2012.

APPENDIX 3: List of Finnish bass clarinet music. By ensemble type

WITHOUT ELECTRONICS

Solo

1981—Marttinen, Tauno: *Maahinen* op. 198 (solo bass clarinet).

1985—Marttinen, Tauno: *Palava Pensas* op. 253 (solo bass clarinet).

1987—Suilamo, Harri: *Yell - le Cri de Merlin* (solo bass clarinet).

1991—Nieminen, Kai: *The Mist Hobgoblin* (solo bass clarinet).

1999—Tiensuu, Jukka: *Asteletsa* (solo bass clarinet).

2002—Wennäkoski, Lotta: *Limn* (solo bass clarinet).

2003—Hietala, Timo: *Musta sydän yhtä punainen kuin valkoinen* (solo bass clarinet).

2006—Hakola, Kimmo: *Virkku* (solo bass clarinet).

2011—Dumitrescu, Adina: *Necklace* (solo bass clarinet).

2017—Supponen, Lauri: *Eau & Gaz à tous les étages* (solo bass clarinet).

2020—Koskelin, Olli: *Animal II* (solo bass clarinet).

Duo

Duo with piano

1940—Rajula, Matti: *Mesikämmen* (bass clarinet and piano).

1959—Hannikainen, Väinö: *Pilvinen Päivä* (bass clarinet and piano).

1977/1978—Segerstam, Leif: *Epitaph No.2d* (bass clarinet and piano).

1981—Rechberger, Herman: *Szene am…* (bass clarinet and piano).

1984—Kaipainen, Jouni: *Piping Down the Walleys Wild* op. 26 (bass clarinet and piano).

1990—Fagerudd, Markus: *Ingrepp I* (bass clarinet and piano).

1991—Koskelin, Olli: *Echos colorés* (bass clarinet and piano).

1995—Hämeenniemi, Eero: *Duaali* (bass clarinet and piano).

1997—Lintinen, Kirmo: *Oikku* (bass clarinet and piano).

2005—Judin, Petri: *Rotation IV* (bass clarinet and piano).

2007—Rechberger, Herman: *Cranes in company* (bass clarinet and piano).

2019—Heininen, Paavo: *Sonata* op. 147 (bass clarinet and piano).

Duo with winds

1993—Sermilä, Jarmo: *Danza 4B* (oboe and bass clarinet).

1995—Hämeenniemi, Eero: *Distant cousins* (bass clarinet and didgeridoo).

2000—Vuori, Harri: *Galdr* (bass clarinet and French horn).

2009—Talvitie, Riikka: *Broken Lullaby* (clarinet and bass clarinet).

2010—Dumitrescu, Adina: *Remember Anton Pann* (E-flat clarinet and bass clarinet).

2018/2020—Hynninen, Maija: *Glow within* (flute and bass clarinet).

Duo with strings

1990—Saariaho, Kaija: *Oi Kuu* (bass clarinet and cello).

1991—Hakola, Kimmo: *Capriole* (bass clarinet and cello).

1991—Länsiö, Tapani: *A Due* (bass clarinet and cello).

1991/1997—Tiensuu, Jukka: *Plus IIb* (bass clarinet and cello).

2002—Kuitunen, Kimmo: *Crest, trough and scrolling nodes* (bass clarinet and cello).

Duo with guitar

2013—Fagerudd, Markus: *Bluesoresques* (bass clarinet and guitar).

2013—Whittall, Matthew: *A fragile peace* (bass clarinet, two scordatura guitars—one player—and live electronics/fixed media).

Duo with percussion

1983—Marttinen, Tauno: *Duo* op. 220 (bass clarinet and marimba).

1983—Rechberger, Herman: *All'ongharese* (bass clarinet and percussion).

1983—Sermilä, Jarmo: *Clockwork Etudes* (bass clarinet and marimba/vibraphone).

1985—Marttinen, Tauno: *Metamorfos* op. 245 (bass clarinet and marimba).

2005—Hyvärinen, Asta: *After trace* (bass clarinet and marimba).

2007—Auvinen, Antti: *Karkija* (bass clarinet and marimba).

2016—Hassinen, Mikko: *Raqs* (bass clarinet and tombak).

2021—Wennäkoski, Lotta: *Rimbalzi* (bass clarinet and percussion).

Duo with voice

1994—Kervinen, Mikko: *John Dowland-transcriptions* (voice and bass clarinet).

2001–2008—Wennäkoski, Lotta: *Children Songs* (tenor and bass clarinet).

Duo with other instruments

1983—Marttinen, Tauno: *October* op. 227 (bass clarinet and accordion).

1995—Sermilä, Jarmo: *Mechanical Partnership* (bass clarinet and accordion).

2007—Dumitrescu, Adina: *Pas de deux'n keskustelu matkalla kotiin* (bass clarinet and kantele).

Multiple bass clarinets

1998—Hietala, Timo: *Last Two Lamantines* (two bass clarinets).

1999—Länsiö, Tapani: *SonoS* (two bass clarinets).

2001—Kerko, Harri: *…aistin…* (six bass clarinets).

2008/2015—Supponen, Lauri: *King of Spades* (two bass clarinets).

2008—Wennäkoski, Lotta: *Andas* (two bass clarinets).

2012—Judin, Petri: *Prelude grotesque* (two bass clarinets).

2018—Autio, Kalle: *The Great Rodeo Fragments* (four bass clarinets).

2018—Wennäkoski, Lotta: *Rumbo* (six bass clarinets).

Concertante Music

1992—Hietala, Timo: *Viluinen Pingviini* (bass clarinet and orchestra).

1998—Hietala, Timo: *Lunnin Tango* (bass clarinet and chamber orchestra).

1998—Nieminen, Kai: *Dance Hobgoblin* (bass clarinet and string orchestra).

1999—Wennäkoski, Lotta: *Sade avaa* (bass clarinet and ensemble).

2000—Hämeenniemi, Eero: *The snake in the rope* (bass clarinet and chamber orchestra).

2001—Fagerudd, Markus: *The Carousel* (bass clarinet and clarinet ensemble).

2001—Vuori, Harri: *Concerto* (bass clarinet and orchestra).

2006—Haapamäki, Sampo: *Kirjo* (bass clarinet and chamber orchestra).

2007—Wennäkoski, Lotta: *Kuule II* (bass clarinet and ensemble).

2013—Hietala, Timo: *HIP Concerto* (bass clarinet and chamber orchestra).

2013—Kesti, Jouni: *Concerto* (bass clarinet and orchestra).

2014—Dumitrescu, Adina: *As they met me* (bass clarinet and orchestra).

2018—Aho, Kalevi: *Concerto* (bass clarinet and orchestra).

Other

1951—Ringbom, Nils-Eric: *Sestetto* (oboe, cor anglais, clarinet, bass clarinet, bassoon and French horn).

1989—Puumala, Veli-Matti: *Kaarre* (dancer and clarinettist).

1991—Trbojević, Jovanka: *...kada bih mog'o drag...* (mezzo-soprano, bass clarinet, double bass and percussion).

1996—Lintinen, Kirmo: *Faabeli* (flute, bass clarinet, guitar and percussion).

2002—Lintinen, Kirmo: *Abrakadabra* (flute, bass clarinet, guitar and percussion).

2008—Wennäkoski, Lotta: *Suka* (flute, oboe, clarinet, French horn, bassoon and bass clarinet).

2010—Muro, Juan Antonio: *Au-dessus des nuages* (flute, oboe, bass clarinet and guitar).

2012—Zinovjev, Sauli: *Runo Runosta* (soprano, bass clarinet and guitar).

WITH ELECTRONICS

Solo

1994—Pohjannoro, Hannu: *saari, rannaton* (bass clarinet and tape).

1978/1998—Heininen, Paavo: *Gymel* (bass clarinet and tape).

1999—Trbojević, Jovanka: *Le Fantôme Du Vent* (bass clarinet, tape and live electronics).

2001/2009—Nuorvala, Juhani: *Concertino* (bass clarinet and tape).

2012—Moreno, Josué: *IN-AUDITO* (bass clarinet and live electronics).

2018—Talvitie, Riikka: *Heinä* (bass clarinet, pre-recorded voice, video and live electronics).

Duo

1993/1995—Puumala, Veli-Matti: *Basfortel* (bass clarinet, piano/Midi keyboard and live electronics).

2005—Talvitie, Riikka: *Seireenietydi* (soprano, bass clarinet and live electronics).

2015—Raasakka, Ville: *Garden* (sound file, bass clarinettist and object player with gardening tools).

Concertante Music

1983–1985—Lindberg, Magnus: *Kraft* (clarinettist, cellist, pianist, two percussionists, live electronics and orchestra).

2018—Moreno, Josué: *The Process of Becoming* (bass clarinet, choir, electronics and sound installation).

Other

1982—Lindberg, Magnus: *Action-Situation-Signification* (bass clarinettist, pianist, percussionist, cellist and tape).

1982—Rechberger, Herman: *Sirba* (three clarinets, bass clarinet and tape).

1986—Lindberg, Magnus: *Ur* (clarinet/bass clarinet, violin, cello, double bass, piano/synthesiser and live electronics).

1993—Puumala, Veli-Matti: *Kaarre II* (dancer, clarinettist and live electronics).

1995—Hietala, Timo: *Strutsi* (bass clarinet, 2 percussion players and live electronics).

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