FLUTTER, SWING, AND SQUAWK:
ERIC MANDAT’S *CHIPS OFF THE OL’ BLOCK*

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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By

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Dedicated to:
Robert Paul Moran
(12/13/39- 8/6/11)
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ABSTRACT

FLUTTER, SWING, AND SQUAWK:
ERIC MANDAT’S CHIPS OFF THE OL’ BLOCK

By
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Master of Music in Performance

The bass clarinet first appeared in the music world as a supportive instrument in orchestras, wind ensembles and military bands, but thanks to Giuseppe Saverio Raffaele Mercadante’s opera Emma d'Antiochia (1834), the bass clarinet began to embody the role of a soloist. Important passages in orchestral works such as Strauss’ Don Quixote (1898) and Stravinsky’s Rite of Spring (1913) further advanced the perception of the bass clarinet as a solo instrument, and beginning in the 1970’s, composers such as Harry Sparnaay and Brian Ferneyhough began writing solo works for unaccompanied bass clarinet. In the twenty-first century, clarinet virtuoso and composer Eric Mandat experiments with the capabilities of the bass clarinet in his piece Chips Off the Ol’ Block, utilizing enormous registral leaps, techniques such as multiphonics and quarter-tone fingerings, as well as incorporating jazz-inspired rhythms into the music. Through an analysis of the piece and a series of interviews including Eric Mandat and other soloists and composers, this thesis will demonstrate how Chips Off the Ol’ Block has inspired soloists to pursue more bass clarinet repertoire and to view the instrument as equivalent to the b-flat clarinet.
When the bass clarinet was first introduced into the orchestra, the instrument was used to support the bass line, playing either clarinet parts an octave lower or playing in unison with the bassoons.¹ Composers valued the bass clarinet’s tone and the strong presence it had in the orchestra. In the mid-eighteenth century, composers such as Saverio Mercadante and Giacomo Meyerbeer began writing solos for the instrument into their operas. At times in both composers’ operas, the bass clarinet could be heard as a true solo instrument. In 1913, composer Igor Stravinsky also pursued the bass clarinet as a soloist. His composition *Rite of Spring* showcases the bass clarinet as a solo instrument.² Even though the bass clarinet is still considered a supportive instrument in the music world, the unique timbre and strong presence make it one of composers’ favorite instruments for solo writing. In 1999, composer Eric Mandat changed the repertoire for bass clarinet with his piece *Chips Off the Ol’ Block*. This solo bass clarinet composition helped complete the transformation of the bass clarinet’s reputation from that of a supportive instrument into a solo instrument. Mandat experiments with the capabilities of the bass clarinet by incorporating enormous register leaps and extended techniques such as multiphonics and quartertones, thus involving the bass clarinet in current compositional trends. Mandat’s *Chips Off the Ol’ Block* helps inspire soloists to pursue more bass clarinet repertoire and to finally view the instrument in the role of a


solo instrument.

A personal interview with composer Eric Mandat has helped the analysis of Chips of the Ol’ Block and also helped put his piece into context in clarinet literature. Mandat began his musical career at the age fourteen with five years of piano lessons. He began to learn composition through assignments from his piano teacher. In fifth grade, he was introduced to an instrumental program. According to Mandat, he and his brother would listen to a record called Instruments of the Orchestra, probably Benjamin Britten’s 1946 recording with the London Symphony Orchestra. When Mandat heard the clarinet in the recording he said, “I thought the clarinet was a ‘cool’ sounding instrument and I wanted to play it.”3 Mandat continued his clarinet studies through high school. He played saxophone in his high school’s jazz band and played and composed for a rock band called Liquid Jungle that later changed its name to Fist.

After graduating High school, Mandat began his bachelor’s degree at University of North Texas studying with Lee Gibson. He played Johann Brahms’ Clarinet Sonatas, Weber’s Clarinet Concerto No.1, Johann Stamitz’ Concerto, Carl Nielsen’s Concerto, and Gioacchino Rossini’s Introduction, Theme and Variations. Outside of his lessons, Mandat began to explore newer pieces that included extended techniques. One of Mandat’s favorite pieces to learn was William O. Smith’s Variants. Written in 1963, Variants is a comprehensive, jazz-inspired collection of extended techniques used throughout the composition. The techniques include multiphonics, a mute used to extend range of the clarinet, flutter tongue, vibrato, key clicks, glissandos, humming

3 Eric Mandat, (clarinetist/composer), interview by Nicole Moran, Telephone” Interview with Eric Mandat,” October 6, 2012.
while playing, and suggestive duration of notes due to their spacing (Example 1).  

Example 1: William O. Smith Variants movement six: Dramatic

These exotic sounds, folk music, and jazz also began to influence Mandat’s own compositional style.

During his Masters Degree studies at Yale, Mandat continued studying clarinet performance with Keith Wilson and also studied composition. Composers such as George Crumb began exploring new boundaries in composition. “George Crumb’s music was so colorful and he used many special techniques for all the instruments,” said Mandat. “I really liked Crumb’s Makrokosmos, and I was enamored with his Eleven Echoes of Autumn.” Written in 1965 for alto flute, clarinet, violin, and piano, each section of the

Some examples include the clarinet and alto flute playing into the piano to change the vibrations of the pitches played, whistling while playing, overblowing pitches to “produce shrill wind sound,” and scraping fingernails against metal strings (example 2).\(^7\)

Example 2: George Crumb *Eleven Echoes of Autumn.*

Mandat continued. “I quickly became familiar with everything else he had written up to that time (late 70s), and loved it all. I really scrutinized his scores and tried to emulate some of the coloristic techniques in my composition assignments.”\(^8\)

Due to the limited repertoire using extended technique, Mandat began to compose pieces incorporating new techniques that explored the boundaries for the clarinet. Mandat commented, “I was looking for different ways to make sound happen.” Each composition he writes is a way to solve a problem to do something differently than in a previous piece.

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\(^8\) Eric Mandat, (clarinetist/composer), interview by Nicole Moran, Telephone "Interview with Eric Mandat," October 6, 2012.
He says that his compositional style is influenced by the minimalist aesthetic and by the composers that began using extended technique in their pieces.

Twentieth century repertoire followed a new set of guidelines. Composers began using their own fundamental styles for individual development. There is a primary importance in the composition in attacks, dynamics, and variation in tone rather than in tonality. Articulations such as flutter-tongue become popular in the twentieth century.⁹ Some examples of either works using flutter-tongue include Richard Strauss’s *Don Quixote*, representing the braying of the sheep and Alban Berg’s *Four Pieces* in the first movement. In Brian Ferneyhough’s *Time and Motion Study I* for solo bass clarinet, the composer instructs the bass clarinet to flutter-tongue through the piece.¹⁰ Multiphonics, the effect of an instrument producing more than two pitches simultaneously, also became a popular sound in clarinet repertoire. By changing the fingering of a particular note, the clarinet is given the opportunity to produce more than one pitch at a time. William Bergsma’s *Illegible Canons* for percussion and clarinet exhibits examples of multiphonics in the second movement (example 3).¹¹


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This is just one example of the development of repertoire using extended techniques for the clarinet.

Each composition Mandat writes begins with improvisation to explore what extended technique are executed better in his hands and then begins to pursue this extended technique. “If it sticks in my head and fingers I feel strong about writing that into my composition,” comments Mandat.12 One example of his early compositions includes Tricolor Capers. Written during his second year of his graduate studies at Yale, this piece includes many jazz-influenced sounds and progressions. Again, Mandat first improvised on the clarinet until he discovered a theme or cell structure he wanted to include in Tricolor Capers and the piece was written from there.

Repertoire for bass clarinet lies mainly with the wind ensemble repertoire, but it is featured in the orchestra as well. The earliest surviving opera including bass clarinet is Saverio Mercadante’s 1834 opera Emma d’Antiochia. Mercadante writes extensive bass clarinet solos throughout the opera.13

Another early piece including bass clarinet is Giacomo Meyerbeer’s opera Les Huguenots. In Act V, the bass clarinet is used as an accompaniment during the Raoul and Valentine’s wedding scene. The bass clarinet is also used in the trio Interrogatoire to accompany the three singers for twenty-five bars. Other compositions include Hector Berlioz’ Grand Symphonie Funèbre et Triomphle, Guiseppe Verdi’s Ernani, Richard Wagner’s Lohengrin WWV 75, and Camille Saint-Saëns First Symphony Op.2.


Beginning in January of 1999 Mandat had his first opportunity to perform on bass clarinet while teaching at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. “I wanted to see if I could do the same thing for bass clarinet that I could on the clarinet”. As Mandat improvised on the bass clarinet and small themes began to blossom and become established in his fingers, the skeleton of *Chips Off the Ol’ Block* was born. “I wanted to write a composition based on little themes that would mold and develop but would get cut off and interrupted by a different theme,” Mandat says. As a result, he does not use a standard compositional form such as sonata or rondo. Instead, the composition consists of four characters that keep trying to develop but are interrupted by different themes. Each section includes different extended technique such as multiphonics, quartertones, microtones, flutter tongue, and glissandos.

To begin the composition, Mandat uses a repeat ad libitum in measure one consisting of pitches G, A-flat, G, and C (example 4).

Example 4: Mandat’s *Chips Off the Ol’ Block* measure 1

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Using set theory, the analysis of the first four notes could be labeled as a [015] including the minor second between the G and A-flat and the framing interval of a perfect fourth between the G and C. When asked, Mandat if his piece was composed using set theory, he said, “I wanted the idea of the piece to be twisted and manic. I tended to stick with certain interval combinations such as minor and major seconds.”

He also comments that the themes were created by improvising, not by deciding on a strict form or structure. In measure one, Mandat begins with the dynamic niente (Italian: “from nothing”) and continues to crescendo up to forte. Mandat comments, “I wanted to create the effect the piece had been going a long time before the composition begins.” It starts off the piece with a swirling effect that gives the music tension before the first theme begins.

Measure two begins with an explosion into the first theme. During the course of the first theme mm 1-32, Mandat includes a variety of dynamics from fortissimo to pianissimo. Another example of explosive dynamics is in measure seven when Mandat changes the dynamic from forte to piano on almost every note in the measure (Example 5).

Example 5: Mandat’s Chips Off the Ol’ Block measure 7

The first section is not set to a specific time signature because of the swirling character Mandat wanted to portray. Irregular rhythms like are found in measure six provide the theme with a “twisted and manic” sound (example 6).\footnote{20}

Example 6: Mandat’s *Chips Off the Ol’ Block* measure 6

![Example 6: Mandat’s “Chips Off the Ol’ Block” measure 6](image)

From measure 4 until measure 10, Mandat writes a descending chromatic line from the highest pitch of the measure (F natural) and continues to descend to a C in measure ten. Measure ten also includes an extended amount of minor seconds from D-flat to C (example 7).\footnote{21}

Example 7: Mandat’s *Chips Off the Ol’ Block* measure 10

![Example 7: Mandat’s “Chips Off the Ol’ Block” measure 10](image)

Mandat comments that measure ten is a good example of how he favors the use of minor seconds in the composition.

During the first section mm 1-32 the theme seems to hint at a tonal center. From measure five to eleven there are repeated Gs and starting in measure twelve to measure


twenty-four there are repeated F sharps (example 8).  

Example 8: Mandat, Eric. *Chips Off the Ol’ Block*. measure 5.

This can also be an example of the favoring of the minor second that Mandat is using during in this piece and offers development to the first theme (example 9).

Example 9: Mandat, Eric. *Chips Off the Ol’ Block*. measure 12

“Maybe I was using G and F# as tonal centers, but more likely I was thinking about C as the initial home base, and the others being secondary tonal areas after C,” Replies Mandat. To transition into the next theme, Mandat uses an unmetered scale between measures eleven and twelve (example 10).

Example 10: Mandat’s *Chips Off the Ol’ Block* measure 11

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The scale consists of a pattern of C, A-flat, G, E-flat, D, and D-flat. Mandat states that this scale is imitating a chromatic scale. “During improvising I would get stuck on a spot and needed to find a good pathway to the next idea. I would look at the next possible cell structure and, to help link each idea together, I would use chromatic sections.”

Measure twelve to measure twenty-five Mandat continues expanding the first theme by using varied rhythm throughout the section. In measure thirteen Mandat uses an eighth note and rest pattern which is interrupted by a five-over four-rhythm (example 10).

Example 10: Mandat’s Chips Off the Ol’ Block measure 13

“The rhythm pattern in the short-notes-with-rests section is within a 16th=16th context, so according to straight quarter-note pulsing, the add-on bits have the effect of a little ‘spasm’ messing up the regularity of the pulse,” comments Mandat. In measures nineteen and twenty Mandat continues to mold the rhythmic pattern of the first theme by unusual rhythmic patterns to relate back to a “twisted and manic” theme (example 11).

Example 11: Mandat’s Chips Off the Ol’ Block measure 19-20

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“I wanted to get away from regular rhythms,” Mandat comments. “I wrote quirky rhythms on purpose so it wouldn’t have any square or strict rhythm.”30 A development of the first theme begins in measure twenty-six with a repeat ab libitum measure of the pitches G, A-flat, G, and F-sharp (example 12).31

Example 12: Mandat’s *Chips Off the Ol’ Block* measure 26

In set theory, measure twenty-six would be a [012], which helps signal the recapitulation beginning in measure twenty-seven. In measure twenty-nine, Mandat quotes and embellishes the first measure by using the altissimo range and changing the rhythm (example 13).32

Example 13: Mandat’s *Chips Off the Ol’ Block* measure 29

Measure twenty-nine also includes the first whole note of the piece which is given the instruction *molto Vib!*. Mandat comments that this measure was his “Tarzan theme.”

With the combination of minor seconds and a vibrato, measure twenty nine imitates

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Tarzan's famous victory call as he swings from tree to tree through the jungle. To execute the “Tarzan call,” Mandat comments, “all vibratos marked with an exclamation point need to be as wide and as fast as possible.”

After the whole note, the first theme continues in measure thirty with a slightly varied rhythm. Suddenly in measure thirty-three, the second theme interrupts the varied rhythm with the new character of sustained notes and a slower tempo. “I wanted to provide a wide contrast from the first theme,” comments Mandat. From measure thirty-three to measure forty-four, Mandat introduces multiphonics in the composition (example 14).

Example 14: Mandat’s *Chips Off the Ol’ Block* measure 33-36

Measure thirty-three begins a series of four bar phrases. Mandat writes two bars of multiphonics, one bar “original” fingerings, and then ends with a measure of overblown notes. Each of the four bar phrases descends chromatically from C-sharp to B, moving the melody down into the lower octave of the bass clarinet.

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Mandat begins developing the second theme in measure forty-five, imitating a waltz style with a half note-quarter note rhythm in a three-four time signature (example 15).\textsuperscript{36}

Example 15: Mandat’s \textit{Chips Off the Ol’ Block} measure 45

\textasciitilde
colonna

“I wanted the waltz to have a tune that would pop up over a bass line,” comments Mandat.\textsuperscript{37} During the waltz section, Mandat adds a lyrical line in between the melody and accompaniment measures with a crescendo into the next phrase (m.49) (example 16).\textsuperscript{38}

Example 16: Mandat’s \textit{Chips Off the Ol’ Block} measure 49

\textasciitilde
colonna

This lyrical and expressive nature of this section provides the “wide contrast from the first theme” that Mandat was interested in. He begins to expand on the lyrical second theme in measure sixty-six using quarter tones that required special fingerings (example 17).\textsuperscript{39}

\textsuperscript{37} Eric Mandat, (clarinetist/composer), interview by Nicole Moran, Telephone “Interview with Eric Mandat,” October 6, 2012.
“Second time through the phrase I wanted to tweak the melody to make it sound like it was developing,” comments Mandat. From measures sixty-six to seventy-two, the melody is modified with an increase in quarter tones and dynamics. Continuing to develop the theme, measure seventy-one and seventy-two quickens the rhythm to eighth notes with a crescendo e accelerando molto (increase volume and speed greatly), but the development is interrupted in measure seventy-three with the introduction of the third section.

Measure seventy-three to measure seventy-eight works as a small transition into measure seventy-nine. Starting in measure seventy-three the transition is broken into two bar fragments. Measure seventy-three starts the phrase on a C-sharp moving the scale up in a chromatic scale ending on an altissimo E (example 18).

Example 18: Mandat’s Chips Off the Ol’ Block measure 73-74

41 Eric Mandat, Chips Off the Ol’ Block, Carbondale, IL: Cirrus Music, 1999.
Measure seventy-five involves an expanded chromatic scale ending on an altissimo F. Each phrase ends by ascending chromatically from E to F-sharp moving the composition into the third section. From measure seventy-eight to seventy-nine we have the largest interval from an altissimo F-sharp to one of the lowest notes C-sharp. This massive leap provides an example of the great range of the bass clarinet (example 19).

Example 19: Mandat’s *Chips Off the Ol’ Block* measure 78-79

![Example 19](image)

Measure seventy-nine initiates a “swing it” section. “This section was just from the inspiration to swing... I didn’t have much else in mind,” comments Mandat. He molds the third theme into a “swing it” section by combining jazz like rhythms and articulations. Measures eighty-four to eighty-seven for example use syncopated rhythms, placing the rhythm of the melody on off-beats, and articulation combinations such as tenutos and staccatos to mold a jazz theme (example 20).

Example 20: Mandat’s *Chips Off the Ol’ Block* measure 84-87

![Example 20](image)

Mandat also inserts a vibrato into measure ninety-two to integrate the popular jazz articulation. Another popular jazz articulation that Mandat uses to develop the

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composition is flutter tongue. Starting in measure ninety-two, the bass clarinet begins to incorporate flutter tonguing into the melody in the low register (example 21).  

Example 21: Mandat’s *Chips Off the Ol’ Block* measure 92

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    mf
    \includegraphics{example21.png}
```

“[flutter tonguing] is my favorite sound that I had done when playing the bass clarinet in the low register,” comments Mandat.  

“It sounds like a revving car engine.” Measure one hundred two develops the third section with a continuation of the use of flutter tongue and syncopated rhythms. This section provides the bass clarinetist with some exposure to jazz rhythms and articulations. (example 22).  

Example 22: Mandat’s *Chips Off the Ol’ Block* measure 102

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    mf
    \includegraphics{example22.png}
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Measure one hundred twelve interrupts the third section and introduces a new theme. This fourth theme is the first one that has a square rhythm with consistent sixteen notes. This section also includes the largest amount of quarter tones. Each of the written fingering was used during the planning process of the composition. As Mandat was improvising on the bass clarinet, he found which quarter tones worked for him and then

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used the chosen quarter tones in the composition. Measure one hundred fifteen shows the combination of ordinary fingers with the quarter tones (example 23).  

Example 23: Mandat’s *Chips Off the Ol’ Block* measure 115

![Example 23: Mandat’s *Chips Off the Ol’ Block* measure 115](image)

The theme also has a sequential motion and is repeated in a higher or lower pitch. For example, the melody begins with a perfect fifth between A and E and continues the phrase until measure one hundred fourteen. Measure one hundred sixteen begins the sequence section with the same rhythm but starting on a C sharp higher. The sequence changes again in measure one hundred twenty with a movement between an F and C sharp. Measure one hundred twenty is the first repeated measure that has been designated as being repeated for only three times (example 24).

Example 24: Mandat’s *Chips Off the Ol’ Block* measure 120

![Example 24: Mandat’s *Chips Off the Ol’ Block* measure 120](image)

“It was just a simple way to save space,” replies Mandat. “It didn’t have a whole lot to do with the repetition.” This sequence motion gives the fourth theme a ‘sturm und drang’

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feeling because it uses large leaps, dynamic changes and sixteenth note rhythms to give the section an intensely emotional character.  

Measure one hundred twenty-two repeats the sequence that is found in measure one hundred fifteen. Suddenly, the composition comes to a halt in measure one hundred thirty with a “freely repeat ab lib.” section where a whole note is given the instructions for the player to “explore harmonics” (example 25).  

Example 25: Mandat’s *Chips Off the Ol’ Block* measure 128-129

This is the first whole note that has been used since the second theme in measure forty. These two repeated measure provide a transition from the previous sections and help begin the reprise of the themes. “This was the pivot point for the composition,” adds Mandat. “It helps begin the long transition into the reprise of the themes.” The transition continues from measure one hundred thirty to one hundred thirty-five with the combination of repetitive Gs and microtones. A special fingering is needed to play the intervals smaller than a semitone (example 26).  

Example 26: Mandat’s *Chips Off the Ol’ Block* measure 132-135

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This section also includes a cresc. poco a poco, adding tension before the reprise in measure one hundred thirty-six. “I wanted the ‘repeated G’ section to grow out of the ‘explore harmonic’ section to help set up the reprise,” comments Mandat.\(^5\)

The reprise begins in measure one hundred thirty-six with the “swing it” section. The section begins with the “car engine” flutter tongue and continues to reference articulations and syncopated rhythm used in the third theme (example 27).\(^6\)

Example 27: Mandat’s *Chips Off the Ol’ Block* measure 136

Suddenly, the “swing it” melody is interrupted in measure one hundred forty with a reference to the first theme (m.9) (example 28).\(^7\)

Example 28: Mandat’s *Chips Off the Ol’ Block* measure 140

Measure one hundred forty-two includes an overblown whole note which is found in the second theme in measures thirty-six and forty. “In the reprise, each theme is coming back


in fragments, trying to come together... but they can’t due to their different characteristics,” comments Mandat.⁵⁸

In measure one hundred forty-three, Mandat continues the flutter tongue from the third theme but only for one measure. Measures one hundred forty-five cites a section that imitates the first theme (example 29).⁵⁹

Example 29: Mandat’s *Chips Off the Ol’ Block* measure 145

Measure one hundred forty-nine also makes a reference to the “Tarzan call” from measure twenty-nine. However, Mandat changes the instructions on the held note to “as long as possible” and adds a *sforzato* with a *crescendo* into the next section. “I wanted to build a lot of tension... like being frozen in the piece,” comments Mandat.⁶⁰ “When it releases, it will be like a spring board into the next section (example 30).⁶¹

Example 30: Mandat’s *Chips Off the Ol’ Block* measure 149

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The next section, measure one hundred fifty, is titled “headlong” and begins with a leap from altissimo A-flat to a low G. This provides an example of the large range capabilities of the bass clarinet (example 31).  

Example 31: Mandat’s *Chips Off the Ol’ Block* measure 149-150

This section also continues to combine each of the themes. For example, in measure one hundred fifty-three to one hundred fifty-four, Mandat combines the consistent sixteenth note motive from the fourth theme, some irregular rhythms used in the first theme, and the vibrato articulation from the “swing it” or third theme (example 32).

Example 32: Mandat’s *Chips Off the Ol’ Block* measure 153-154

In measure one hundred sixty, Mandat adds the quarter tones used in the second theme. This gives the reprise section the feeling that each of the sections are trying to combine with each other.

Measure one hundred sixty-seven gives the reprise a hiccup with the introduction of eighth notes at the end of the measure. Measure one hundred sixty-eight also interrupts

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the reprise using a pitch bend at the end of the measure (example 33).\(^{64}\)

Example 33: Mandat’s *Chips Off the Ol’ Block* measure 167-168

![Example 33](image)

Once the pitch bend occurs, the themes seem to stop trying to combine with one another.

In measure one hundred sixty-nine, the fourth theme emerges into one measure sequential fragments (example 34).\(^{65}\)

Example 34: Mandat’s *Chips Off the Ol’ Block* measure 169

![Example 34](image)

In between the sequences, Mandat inserts chromatic scale that uses many quarter tones. Measures one hundred seventy-one and one hundred seventy-two develop the theme by fragmenting the sequence further, but this is interrupted by the third repeated one measure fragment (m.173). This measure is a reference to the first measure of the piece with the repeat ad libitum of four sixteenth notes as it crescendos. This measure provides the swirling effect or tension to push the piece into the last part of the piece (example 35).\(^{66}\)

Example 35: Mandat’s *Chips Off the Ol’ Block* measure 173

![Example 35](image)


Measure one hundred seventy-four titled “frantic” begins another reprise of the first theme. However, each “twisted and manic” phrase is now written in half notes that ascend stepwise. For example, in measure one hundred seventy-five, the phrase ends with an altissimo F but the next phrase ends with an altissimo G (m.176) (example 36).

Example 36: Mandat’s *Chips Off the Ol’ Block* measure 174-175

Measure one hundred seventy-seven ends the phrase with a quarter note altissimo F but the momentum is interrupted with a vibrato whole note. Measure one hundred seventy-nine has a frantic descending line which quickly ascends again in measure one hundred eighty up to an altissimo B with a fermata and the instruction to glissando to give a false ending. One hundred eighty-one ends the piece with a quote of the “swing it” theme with the loudest dynamic of the piece (example 37).

Example 37: Mandat’s *Chips Off the Ol’ Block* measure 181

“I wanted to end the piece with the jazz section because it was probably the most tuneful and cute moment of the piece,” comments Mandat. He also ends the piece by outlining

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a C-sharp diminished triad, but the last note of the piece is a C natural. Instead of ending with a C-sharp, the C natural gives the ending a tense feeling and leaves the composition with an unresolved ending.

*Chips Off the Ol’ Block* and other compositions by Eric Mandat have inspired clarinetists and bass clarinetists to pursue more pieces that include extended techniques. For example, Leslie Bassett’s *Soliloquies* calls for resonance trills, pitch bends, and multiphonics throughout the whole piece (example 38).

**Example 38: Bassett’s *Soliloquies* selections from movement 1**

Since the premiere in 1999, Eric Mandat’s *Chips Off the Ol’ Block* has inspired clarinetist to pursue more bass clarinet repertoire. In 2007, Lawrie Bloom, bass clarinetist of the Chicago Symphony, decided to learn *Chips Off the Ol’ Block*. “I’ve liked Eric’s music for many years, and when I discovered he had written a solo bass clarinet piece, I wanted to learn it,” comments Bloom. One interesting comment that Bloom made was that the quarter tones added in-between the regular fingerings were challenging. “You look at a D and you have known that fingering for many years, but now you have to play a completely new fingering to get the pitch Eric wants. I found that

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quite challenging.” Bloom gives us an excellent example of how Mandat has evolved repertoire for the bass clarinet in terms of extended techniques. It may be a challenging piece due merely to the limited amount of repertoire including such techniques.

Saverio Mercadante’s opera *Emma d’Antiochia* (1834) began the bass clarinet’s solo career, and influential composers such as Meyerbeer, Berlioz, Saint-Saëns, and Stravinsky have shown the bass clarinet to be a capable solo instrument. The twentieth century brought composers who began to break compositional guidelines and explore new techniques. Eric Mandat, clarinet virtuoso and composer, is one of these leading composers for new clarinet and bass clarinet music. Influenced by composers such as William O. Smith and George Crumb, Mandat incorporated a collection of extended techniques into each of his compositions. With the introduction of *Tricolor Capers* in 1980, Mandat began his new experiment with the bass clarinet. *Chips Off the Ol’ Block* was the first solo bass clarinet piece Mandat wrote. The composition was written with the idea of having four distinctive themes that never fully develop in the piece. However, for each theme, Mandat incorporates an extended technique such as multiphonics, quartetones, microtones, flutter tongue, glissando and jazz-inspired rhythms to provide something different for the bass clarinet repertoire. Adding these extended techniques to a solo bass clarinet piece began to influence other clarinet virtuosos to play *Chips*. Clarinet players like Lawrie Bloom have found this piece to be very influential as a performer. “I think this is a terrific piece for solo bass clarinet,” comments Lawrie Bloom. “As contemporary solo bass pieces go, this is actually a fairly conservative work,

72 Lawrie Bloom, (bass clarinetist of Chicago Symphony), interview by Nicole Moran, Email "Interview with Lawrie Bloom,” December 18, 2012.
and therefore I think it has a great deal of staying power in the repertoire.”73 Eric Mandat’s *Chips Off the Ol’ Block* helps soloist understand that the bass clarinet no longer needs to be a supportive instrument due to the capabilities executed in this piece. The bass clarinet has now embodied the role of a solo instrument.

73 Lawrie Bloom, (bass clarinetist of Chicago Symphony), interview by Nicole Moran, Email "Interview with Lawrie Bloom," December 18, 2012.
Recital Program
Nicole Moran
Master of Music in Clarinet Performance
March 23, 2012
California State University, Northridge
Recital Hall

Melodie & Scherzetto
Arthur Coquard
(1846-1910)

Early Character Pieces
Suite
1. Improvvisata
2. Elegia
3. Danza Campestre
Andantino
Ferruccio Busoni
(1866-1924)

In Memory of Robert Paul Moran

Sonata for Clarinet and Piano
Arnold Bax
(1883-1953)

I
II

Cello Suite No. 1
Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

1. Prelude

Chips off the Ol’ Block
Eric Mandat
(1957- )

Cat’s Aria
Gioachino Rossini
Arr by: Russell Denwood
(1792-1868)

Featuring: Bobby Solis, Clarinet

Black
Marc Mellits
(1966- )

Featuring: Ernesto Cruz, Bass Clarinet
BIBLIOGRAPHY


