
The Clarinet and Pop Music
Presentation at the 2009 K-State Music Education Symposium
Monday, June 8, 5:30 PM

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• **The Problem**

It is an unfortunate fact that the clarinet is rarely featured in modern media in pop music styles. This represents a huge shift from the Big-Band Era of the 1940's, when clarinet-playing band leaders (particularly Artie Shaw!) represented the ultimate in fashion and style. Today, the clarinet has suffered in popularity due to this trend, and consequently it is often difficult to convince young students that the clarinet can indeed be a very "cool" instrument! Fortunately, the clarinet as a jazz instrument is beginning to make a comeback, led by artists such as Eddie Daniels.

• **Some Suggested Pop or Traditional Jazz Tunes for the Clarinet**

Stevie Wonder: *You are the Sunshine of my Life*

Jobim: *The Girl from Ipanema*

Kosma: *Autumn Leaves*

Traditional: *Just a Closer Walk with Thee*

Both *Autumn Leaves* and *Just a Closer Walk* are excellent tunes for beginning to experiment with ornamentation and improvisation.

• **Recordings that Showcase the Clarinet in a Pop Style**

Eddie Daniels: ***Blackwood*** (GRP Records, 1990)

This album is guaranteed to bring a smile to anyone's face! Daniels is really a jazz artist, but this album is more "pop" in style than jazz. Many of the tracks on the CD will really take you back to the pop sounds of the late 1980s—it reminds me of the soundtrack to *Magnum, P.I.* or something similar! As always, Daniels' playing is truly phenomenal. You and your students will never have heard clarinet playing like this!

Eddie Daniels: ***Soundtrack from The Majestic*** (Hollywood Records, 2001)

Eddie Daniels plays the clarinet tracks associated with Spencer Wyatt, the fictitious clarinetist from the movie who fronts the jazz combo titled "The Spencer Wyatt Big Band." Daniels' version of *Begin the Beguine* is nothing short of spectacular.

Clarinetes Ad Libitum: ***Contradanza*** (ONC Produções, Portugal, 2005)

This group is a clarinet quartet from Portugal, perhaps one of the very best clarinet quartets in the world. They play entirely pop/jazz styles, including traditional styles from all over the world. If you ever have the chance to hear them live, the experience is unbelievable. All four players are virtuosos of the highest level, and all of their performances are played memorized.

The album is hard to find in the US, but the group may be heard through YouTube, or from their website: <http://www.clarinetedesadlibitum.net/>