



Foreword

Dear clarinetist, this piece is intended to give you the opportunity to present a wider scope of your abilities to a jury (or your intended audience) and, perhaps, to even give you a distinct edge over your competitors. Besides all those “normal” skills that instrumentalists are expected to master, like general technique, a beautiful and balanced tone in all registers, speed and clarity in passages etc., this piece also explores other, “extended” skills.

The first I should mention is storytelling! Although music itself may be considered a “story” that is told using sounds, adding the spoken word dimension only supplements the skillset of a well-rounded and accomplished artist in today’s complex cultural landscape. The exploration of this direction allows for several interesting and novel possibilities, of which I chose to highlight the player’s sense of humor! Basically, this piece can be considered a sort of stand-up musicomedy routine (with some specific Romanian touches...).

The performer must play the role of an infatuated, self-absorbed and narcissistic instrumentalist utterly convinced he/she is the best one in the whole wide world. In order to demonstrate this “obvious” fact to the jury (or audience), the player tries to show off as many of his/her skills as possible, ranging from the normal, expected, technical aspects of clarinet playing, beginning from staccato, tenuto, legato, frullato, to slap-tongue, special trills, multiphonics etc., all these in the context of the contemporary music style.

Next, the player demonstrates his/her stylistic flexibility, the ability to tackle other styles and genres besides the usual and expected Classical music roster. I have referenced three distinct clarinet-heavy styles in this section, Klezmer, Jazz and Romanian Manele, but also added the imitation of a Didgeridoo using extended techniques.

Then, the narcissistic instrumentalist showcases his/her large solo, chamber and concerto clarinet repertoire consisting of well-known pieces like Șerban Nichifor’s *Carnyx*, Igor Stravinsky’s *Three pieces for Clarinet*, Jörg Widmann’s *Fantasie*, Sergei Prokofiev’s *Peter and the Wolf*, W.A. Mozart’s *Clarinet Concerto in A major*, George Gershwin’s *Rhapsody in Blue*, Claude Debussy’s *Première Rhapsodie* etc.

In the last sections of the piece, the player’s showboating devolves into a circus of virtuosity, eventually quoting, in an almost absurd postmodern manner, Tina Turner’s *The Best* and Julius Fučík’s *Entry of the Gladiators*, then culminating in a challenging, fast *manea* melody, introduced by the genre’s characteristic over-inflated catchphrases: “Cine-i cel mai tare?” and “Am valoare!” (meaning: “Who’s the absolute best?” and “I have great value!”).

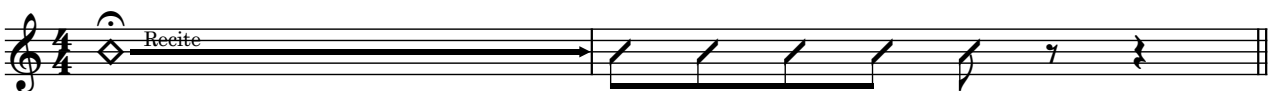
To properly understand this Romanian reference, one must know that the *manea* is a very popular, but “low status” musical genre, that some would probably not openly admit liking and dancing to, even if, in private, almost everybody does. Perhaps due to its marginal status, one can easily notice a heavy emphasis on the themes of greatness, grandeur, high value, wealth etc., hence its central place in this piece.

I hope this short explanation helps clarifying the piece’s intent and meaning. I wish you good luck and hope you’ll truly be... *simply the best!*

I'm the Best One Here

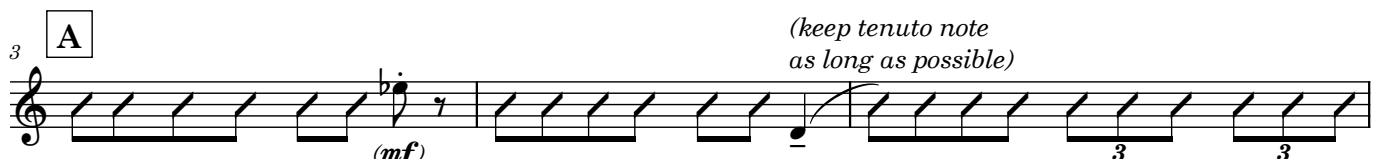
Dan Variu

$\text{♩} = \text{c. } 120$

Cl. 

mf Ladies and Gentlemen of the Jury,
my name is [state name] and
there's no doubt about it...

I'm the best one here!
(with maximal conviction!)

A 

(mf) I can play stac - ca - to, I can play te - nu - to, I can play le - ga - to, mar - ca - to, sfor -
(enumerating his / her skills to the jury) (counting the 5 skills on fingers)

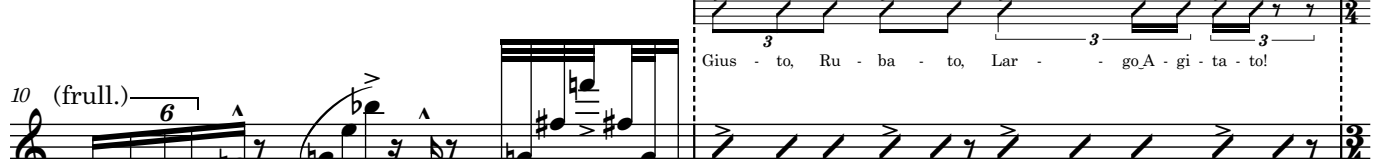


- za - to, frul - la - to, ar - pe - gia - to! Lis - ten!

[contemporary music style]
frull.
sfp **f**
(absolute precision in playing
this passage is not necessary)



8 5 5 7 6 6
frull. **sfz**



10 (frull.) 6 (slap) **sfz** **sfz**

(this is just a more "agogical" version, reflecting what is actually being said.)

Gius - to, Ru - ba - to, Lar - go A - gi - ta - to!
Gius - to, Ru - ba - to, Lar - go A - gi - ta - to!
(may use gestures to "describe" each term)

I'm the Best One Here

(intended rhythmical effect:)

12 *sfpp* < (*mf*) *f* *pp* *f* (*p*) *sfz*

18 *p espress.* *mp* *mf* > > > *sfz* >

Stret - to, ri - stret - to, mac - chia - to...
(enumerating in an rather exaggerated italian manner)

22 *f* frull. *p* frull. fast trill using upper trill keys

[Multiphonic] (like a coffee machine when starting/grinding beans) [Air sound] (the preparation phase, water boiling etc.) *pp* (coffee flowing to the cup)

25 (last drops) (as if sipping coffee) [sip reed] ahhhh... Ge - *mf*

28 - la - to (enthusiastically) *p* *mf* *f* *p* *f* *p*

(as if scooping and stacking ice cream balls on a cone)

30 (as if licking an imaginary ice cream) [lick/slurp reed] *f* *p* < *sf* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p*

32 Mmmm... (enjoying the ice cream) *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p* *mf* *p*

35 **B**

mf There's a lot more I can do, I can play o - ther styles too! Klez - mer, Jazz, e - ven Did - ger - i - doo...
(trying to further impress the jury) (enumerating his/her skills and emphasizing the last one as a surprising killer-feature!)

I'm the Best One Here

3

[doo, doo, doo, doo, doo, doo, doo, doo, doo,]

38

mf

(play as if a didgeridoo using multiphonic gliss. technique, and add voice freely as above)

sfz

sfz

sfz

40

sfz

sfz

You're im - pressed, ay? A - ren't you?

(toward the jury, in a cheeky, heavy australian accent)

42

sfz

sfz

sfz

sfz

sfz

sfz

[klezmer style]

44

mf

sfz

47

mf

sfz

mf

sfz

sfz

[jazz style]

vib.

50

mf

sfz

sfz

sfz

sfz

sfz

sfz

sfz

52 (this is a Romanian phrase meaning: "If you'll give me money, I'll play even manele music")

Dai lo - ve - le?

[Dye lo - veh - leh?

(money rub gesture)

Cânt ma - ne - le!

K'(u)hnt mah - neh - leh!]

(lift shoulders and arms gesture, as if having no other option or showing willingness to compromise)

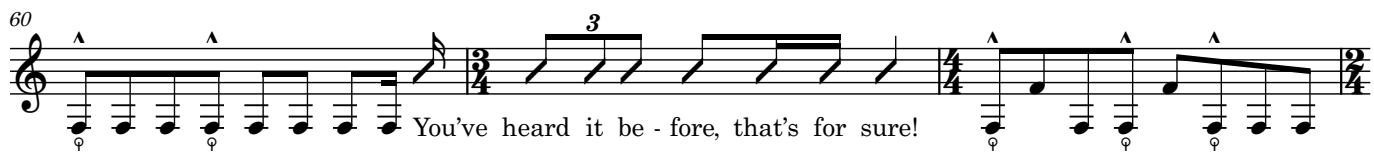
Rubato manelissimo
[balkan-oriental/manele style]

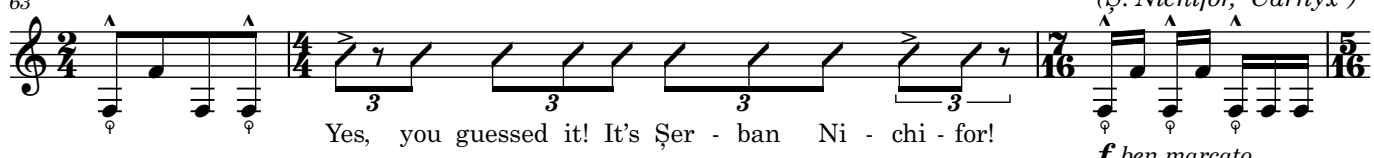
53 

55  But

57 **C** Slightly slower (♩ = c. 100–115) (a clear reference to Tina Turner's "The best",
played like a sax, in a "cool" manner, while
also tapping the heel on tempo, Rock style!)

wait, there's more! There are quotes in the score! Let us ex - plore!
(enthusiastically, like a salesman!) (like the beginning
of a great journey) **mf**

60  You've heard it be - fore, that's for sure!

63  Yes, you guessed it! It's Şer - ban Ni - chi - for!
(enthusiastically) [Cher - bahn Knee - key - for!] **f** *ben marcato*

66  **mf** *giocoso*

70  **f** *ben marcato*

75  Gersh - win! (gliss.)

ff **p**

(I. Stravinsky, "Three pieces for Clarinet")

(Magnus Lindberg, "Ablauf")

(J. Widmann, "Fantasie")

(C. Debussy, "Première Rhapsodie")

(S. Prokofiev, "Peter and the Wolf")

(H. Berlioz, “*Simphonie fantastique*”)

(G. Donizetti, "Studio primo")

101

Do - ni - zet - ti!

I'm the Best One Here

104 **D** (♩ = c. 140)
(Tina Turner)
Hah! Your jaw's on the floor, but there's more!
mf

108 (Nichifor)
(Gerswin)
mf

113 (Stravinsky)
mf

119 (Nichifor)
mf

125 (Mozart)
p grazioso
p ————— *f*

133 (Widmann)
p ————— *f*
(Donizetti)
(Debussy)

139 (Tina Turner)
f
I'm sym - ply the best,
(narcissistically, self-absorbed
gritty, in chest or falsetto voice)

141
Bet - ter than all the rest,
(pointing toward the competitors) Bet - ter than

145
a - ny - one,
A - ny - one you've e - ver met!
(pointing toward the jury)
p < *mp* > < *mf* > <

(from the third beat onward, this gliss. should resemble Gershwin's Rhapsody)

148
f *pp*

The musical score is written for a single melodic line on a treble clef staff. It begins at measure 104 with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a tempo of c. 140. The score is divided into measures by bar lines, with measure numbers 104, 108, 113, 119, 125, 133, 139, 141, 145, and 148 marked at the start of their respective lines. The music incorporates various musical styles and dynamics, as indicated by the parenthetical attributions and dynamic markings. The lyrics are written below the staff, with some lines including performance instructions in parentheses. The score ends with a glissando (gliss.) marked with a wavy line and a double bar line.

E ♩ = c. 120

(J. Fučík, "Entry of the Gladiators")

I'm the Best One Here

7

[balkan-oriental/manele style]

