

# WOLKING ORCHESTRA CATALOG III NEW WORKS

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## *Gone Playin' A Concerto for Clarinet and String Orchestra (16 min.)*

A three-movement concerto for clarinet and strings commissioned and recorded by Dr. Robert Walzel and the Moravian Philharmonic Orchestra. The new recording, "Cross Connection" is available on the Navona label.

- Movt. I, *Gone Fishin'* has the imagery of whirling trout; think "I'm gonna go fishin' and find me a trout". Beginning with a lovely and poignant slow introduction, it shifts to a jazzy rhythmic approach that requires virtuosic solo melodies that sound as if they are being improvised (they are not) by the clarinet solo.
- Movt. II, *Gone Sleepin'* is a jazz lullaby. It is delicate, dreamy, lyrical, and emotional, & not at all influenced by Brahms.
- Movt. III, *Gone Dancin'* is exactly what the title implies, a series of final frantic dances based upon American and Latino (Puerto Rican, Dominican, Cuban) popular dances. The orchestra at one point taps and claps authentic salsa and clave rhythms; everyone in the orchestra becomes a drummer.

### **Gone Playin' Concerto for Clarinet and String orchestra performance history**

●03/02/2006 premiere performance by Dr. Robert Walzel and the Utah Philharmonia, Libby Gardner Concert Hall, Salt Lake City, Utah

●4 performances by Dr. Robert Walzel and the Utah Philharmonia Austria Tour: 03/12/06 Bad Ischl, 03/14/06 Graz, 03/16/06 & 03/17/06 Vienna

●Utah Arts Festival Chamber Orchestra and Robert Walzel, Clarinet, Utah Arts Festival, Festival Stage 06/22/2006

☑Orchestra of Kuopio, Rauno Tikkanen soloist, Robert Baldwin, conductor

Kuopio, Finland October 2008.

●Finnish orchestra conducted by Thomas Germain, Tanja Rasanen clarinet soloist, Sotkamo Finland 01/07/2011 Kajano Finland 01/08/2011

●Recorded by PARMA with the Moravian Philharmonic, July 201

Available for rental \$150, or purchase \$200.

### ***Salt Lake Overture 2002 for Orchestra (12 min.)***

The 12 minute work was commissioned by the Salt Lake Symphony in July of 2001. It is based on the 19<sup>th</sup> century style of the overture as an independent orchestral composition. It presents a variety of musical ideas including fanfares, and elements of jazz. Available for rental or purchase. Similar in style to the themes I composed for the the 2002 Winter Olympics which received world-wide broadcasts.

Available for rental \$150, or purchase \$200.

### ***The Old Gypsy String Quartet (24 min.)***

*Four Movement String Quartet newly recorded by the Moravian Philharmonic Orchestra String Quartet on the new recording, "Cross Connection" available on the Navona label.*

*Parts and Score, purchase only \$75.*

### ***The following are liner notes from the recording***

The ingenuity of the harmonic vocabulary that is the hallmark of the Hungarian gypsy and folk music traditions and which stretches well beyond even the boldest conventions of music theory has captivated composers for more than 250 years. Yet, it is the exotic and uniquely unconventional and spontaneous aspect of performance that gives Hungarian gypsy music – notably its rendition on the violin – its extraordinary status as entertainment. Not intended to be enjoyed merely in the most polite, decorous venues of performance, this music projects its haunting vibrancy especially in social celebrations, parties, and restaurants, fueled significantly by large platters of hearty food and equally generous amounts of Hungarian wine and libations.

In the late 1990s, as he approached his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, Wolking was finally self-assured that he possessed the artistic maturity to write his first string quartet. And, the inspiration for the work came to him during a restaurant break in Budapest after an orchestral recording session. A Hungarian folk tune "was played to me (quite literally) by a strolling gypsy violinist," he recalls. "I was immediately taken by its beauty and

passion, and asked some of the Hungarian classical musicians sitting with me if they knew the tune. One, the principal clarinetist with the Hungarian Symphony, told me it was a sort of classic folk song and proceeded to scribble it out in ink on a napkin and give it to me.” That tune became the basis for the fourth movement of the string quartet composition, titled “The Old Gypsy.”

Wolking initially completed the fourth movement, and continuing to work in reverse order, penned the third movement, which is a series of four episodes based on a canon and is energized by competing atonal and tonal harmonic tensions. He went on to write the second movement that, in its premiere version, opened with a grand European-style waltz and then continued in the second half with a jazz lullaby. (Later, he deleted the jazz lullaby and reconstructed it to become the slow movement of ‘Gone Playin,’ the concerto for clarinet and string orchestra). Finally, he completed the first movement that carries the earmarks of a celebratory fanfare.

The work was written for and premiered by the Utah-based Abramyan String Quartet at the request of Gerald Elias, a violinist and University of Utah music faculty colleague. ‘The Old Gypsy’ was performed at one of the celebration/dedication concerts held in the spring of 2000 for the grand opening of the Libby Gardner Concert Hall and reopening of the David P Gardner Hall on the University of Utah’s main campus in Salt Lake City.

The work is a treasure trove of diverse musical inspirations with rich, dense harmonic structures that are as approachable as they are sophisticated in their permutations.

The moderato tempo marking in the opening movement’s fanfare fantasy belies the bracing visceral pulse evident in each string part. Staccato triplets, vigorous sustained trills, and fleeting episodes of subito loud-and-soft dynamics propel the movement’s intensity. A quiet rubato interlude lasts just five measures before the quartet resumes the fanfare’s pulsing dynamism. Later, the two violins offer yet another extremely brief rubato episode before the music erupts again to finish the movement in a stirring flourish.

The second movement opens with a classically structured slow-tempo valse. The string sound is starkly simple without vibrato and smooth bow strokes. However, with each added grade in dynamics, the tempo increases accordingly, and vice versa, with progressively softer dynamics, the tempo decreases. The soft passages with muted strings, bits of *sul ponticello*, and gentle glissandos are gradually overcome by intense expressions full of rough and near-manic full bow movements that nearly scrape the strings. From its dynamic peak, the valse loses its steam just as it was built up, eventually ending in eight bars that replicate the soft, dark, simply nuanced tones of the opening.

The third movement is a tightly structured four-minute journey of three variations based on an opening 16-bar dissonant canon, with each episode leading progressively to a tonal resolution.

The final movement opens with the two violins realizing in authentic *cigány hegedű* style the Hungarian folk song the composer's friend helped capture on the napkin in the Budapest restaurant. The tune is presented subsequently in four variations that follow the harmonic integrity of previous movements. In the violin cadenza before the 32-bar coda to close out the work, Wolking pays an ever-so-brief yet respectful tribute to Bela Bartok's 'Unaccompanied Violin Sonata.' The sonata, which was commissioned by violinist Yehudi Menuhin, was the Hungarian composer's final work and is considered among the most technically demanding compositions of the solo violin literature.