

James M. Stephenson

YEHTUDES

a series of 12 etudes for clarinet

curated by John Bruce Yeh
cover photo & titles by Molly Yeh



mynameisyeh.com

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YEHTUDES – the story:

In the summer of 2018, I approached John Yeh, the assistant principal and solo E-flat clarinetist of the Chicago Symphony, about collaborating on a clarinet etude book. John and I had just finished a CD project with Cedille Records (“Liquid Melancholy”), which contained a lot of my solo and chamber clarinet music, yet I still felt inspired to create more music for clarinet. Furthermore, John’s daughter, Molly, had recently been making big headlines as a food-blogger (resulting in a subsequent TV show), and upon a visit to her blog (“My Name is Yeh”), I discovered a list of cake recipes that I found to be musically inspiring. And with that, the idea for “Yehtudes” was born.

Following the example of a previous project I had done with trumpet players, John and I together sent out a notice to any interested clarinetists to see if they might like to “subscribe” to the project. To the right is a list of all of the brave clarinetists who signed on, and who agreed to receive “world premiere Yehtudes” in their email inboxes, for their own firsthand look at each one, just created that day. I attempted to address (with John’s help) 12 different points of study for the clarinet, but to do so in a way that would simultaneously be musically rewarding. I also cycled through all of the keys, alternating between major and minor, to try to capture as many musical possibilities as I could, within the brief 12-etude process.

All of this took place during the month of July, 2018, and the result is the set of etudes contained in the subsequent pages.

Of note – as of this date – Yehtudes #5 (“Strawberry Hi-Hat Cupcakes”) and #8 (“Italian Rainbow Cookie Cake”) come with accompaniment. The former uses hi-hat (due to the title), while the latter uses piano. The hi-hat is included herein, while the piano accompaniment for #8 is sold separately at ComposerJim.com.

The list of those who contributed:

John Bruce Yeh
Brendan Agnew
Scott Anderson
Deborah Andrus
Brenden Louis Ayestaran
Marcy Bacon
Allie Brandt
Nicholas Brown
Kim Carr
Joseph Chen
Joe Clark
Carl Collins
David Cook
Vanessa Davis
Kristen Denny-Chambers
Zachary Dierickx
George Drago
Bobby Dunning
Luke Folse
Roger Garrett
Suzanne Gekker
Lucia Gennini
Tammie Avery Gibson
Sasha Conteras Gira
Eric Ginsberg
David Gould
Tara Gray
Jane Grigsby
John Hamm
Cameron Harper
Judi Hartman
Christopher Hills
Marty Johnson
Shannon Kiewitt
Candice Kiser
Jerry Kracht
Melissa Johnson Lander
Robert Larm
Scott MacDonald
Shelagh MacLeod
Liz Gish Matera
Austin McFarland
Mike Medley
Scott Moore
Stephen Moore
Christopher Nichols
Philip O’Connor
Lilia Olsen
Tracey Paddock
Timothy Phillips
Patrick Refsnider
Jeanmarie Riccobono
Barbara Santoro
Brian Schaefer
Eden Schultz
Emilia Segura
Nora Shaffer
David Sherr
Catina Franklin Sweedy
Ibrook Tower
Leigh Wakefield
Gene Wie
Lisa Wissenberg
Scott Wright
Tim Zavadil

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YEHTUDES

by James M. Stephenson

A clarinet etude project in consultation with John Bruce Yeh, the long-serving Chicago Symphony assistant principal and solo E-flat clarinetist. 12 etudes created, focusing on common clarinet issues decided by John, and where each title is based on a recipe from blog-posts ("my name is Yeh") created by his daughter Molly.

Eggboy's Birthday Cake

"Yehtude" #1 - "getting over the breaks"

from composer Jim Stephenson:

This "Yehtude" is created as an effort to focus on those commonly known breaks that exist for the clarinet player. Rather than to continually compose notes that deal with these well-known notes/intervals, I decided instead to try to create something that is (hopefully) musically rewarding, where the player's primary goal is to focus on music, and to overcome the technical issues in order to achieve their artistic vision. This is what would most often occur in the repertoire, and it was my goal to emulate that idea. Tempos should be used only as a guideline. Each player may choose to go slower or faster, per their particular needs.

I thought Molly's "Eggboy" title would coordinate best with an etude dealing with "breaks".

I hope you enjoy a sense of humor with all of that, and that it makes you feel "sunny side up", as John put it.

Jim Stephenson: July 2, 2018

More of Jim's music for clarinet can be found at ComposerJim.com

Eggboy's Birthday Cake

title comes from Molly Yeh's blog: "My name is Yeh"

"Yehtude" #1 - "getting over the breaks"

Somewhat over easy

The musical score is written for a single melodic line in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 3/4. It consists of ten staves of music. The score begins with a tempo marking of 'Somewhat over easy' and a dynamic of *p* *freely*. At measure 9, the tempo changes to 'Moderato: a bit scrambled' with a metronome marking of ♩ = 92 and a dynamic of *pp*. The music continues with various dynamics including *mf*, *p*, *f*, and *pp*, and includes markings for 'accel.' and 'a tempo'. At measure 48, the time signature changes to 2/4. At measure 53, the tempo is marked 'Poached from tempo primo' and the dynamic is *pp*. At measure 63, the tempo is marked 'Hard-boiled!' with a metronome marking of ♩ = 108 and a dynamic of *f*. The piece concludes with a dynamic of *ff*.