



College of Visual and Performing Arts

**REVA AND SID  
DEWBERRY FAMILY  
SCHOOL OF MUSIC**

George Mason University®

Doctoral Clarinet Recital

# Julianna Evans

In collaboration with:

Dr. Ina Mirtcheva Blevins, piano

Chris Kosky, double bass

Vivian Podgainy, cello

Dr. Ying Zhao, piano

March 21, 2026

5:00 p.m.

deLaski 3001

Julianna Evans is a student of  
Dr. Kathy Mulcahy

## SPECIAL THANKS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my family for their constant love and encouragement throughout my musical journey. To my mom, sisters, and my wonderful husband, your support and belief in me mean more than words can express. I am also deeply grateful to my many aunts and uncles for their kindness and support over the years. I would like to honor the memory of my grandmother, whose love and wisdom continue to guide me.

I am especially thankful for the teachers who have shaped me as a musician. My current clarinet teacher, Dr. Kathy Mulcahy, has been an invaluable mentor, and I am deeply grateful for her guidance. I also wish to thank my former teachers, Ken Lee, Dr. Charles West, Ted Oien, Dan Silver, and the late Ronald deKant, for their dedication, knowledge, and lasting influence on my development as a clarinetist.

Thank you to Chris Kosky, Vivian Podgainy and Dr. Ying Zhao for their collaboration. It has been a pleasure to work with such remarkable musicians, whose artistry continues to inspire me. I also sincerely appreciate Dr. Ina Mirtcheva Blevins for bravely taking on the famously “gnarly” piano part in *Gnarly Buttons*. Thank you for making the impossible look effortless!

# Julianna Evans, clarinet

## PROGRAM “American Mosaic”

### Gnarly Buttons

- I. The Perilous Shore
- II. Hoedown (Mad Cow)
- III. Put Your Loving Arms Around Me

John Adams  
(b. 1947)

Dr. Ina Mirtcheva Blevins

~Intermission~

### Benny's Gig

- I. Slow and nostalgic
- II. Brisk, with drive
- III. Very slow and hesitant
- IV. Brisk
- V. Slowly
- VI. Calypso Serenade: Moderately moving
- VII. Lazily moving
- VIII. Jaunty

Morton Gould  
(1913-1996)

Chris Kosky, double bass

### Fantasy Trio, Op. 26

for Clarinet, Violoncello, and Piano

- I. Allegro energico
- II. Andante con espressione
- III. Allegro deciso
- IV. Andante molto e sostenuto

Robert Muczynski  
(1929-2010)

Vivian Podgainy, cello  
Dr. Ying Zhao, piano

## PROGRAM NOTES

**John Adam's** *Gnarly Buttons* is a 26-minute work for clarinet and chamber ensemble composed in 1996. It was co-commissioned by the London Sinfonietta and Present Music and premiered at Queen Elizabeth Hall in London with clarinetist Michael Collins and the composer conducting. The piece is scored for a mixed ensemble of 13 players, including unusual groupings such as banjo (doubling mandolin and guitar), English horn, bassoon, trombone, piano, two sampling keyboards, and strings. Adams described the three movements, *The Perilous Shore*, *Hoedown (Mad Cow)*, and *Put Your Loving Arms Around Me*, as each based on imagined musical models, blending elements of jazz, folk, and minimalism. The title refers both to the gnarled texture of tree bark and, irreverently, to the “buttons” of a clarinet’s keywork. The work has personal significance; Adams has cited his father’s influence and his father’s struggle with Alzheimer’s as influences on the music.<sup>1</sup>

The first movement of *Gnarly Buttons*, "The Perilous Shore", is based on a Protestant shape-note hymn found in a 19th century volume, *The Footsteps of Jesus*, the first lines which are:

*O Lord steer me from that Perilous Shore  
Ease my soul through tempest's roar  
Satan's leering help me firmly turn away  
Hurl me singing into that tremulous day!*<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Sarah Cahill, “Adams, John,” in *Grove Music Online*, ed. Mark Alburger, Oxford Music Online, 2001, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.42479>.

2. “Gnarly Buttons, John Adams,” in *The Ford Program Booklet*, performance by The Los Angeles Philharmonic, Walt Disney Concert Hall, Los Angeles, March 15, 1997.

The melodic line is twisted and embellished from the start, appearing first in monody and eventually providing both micro and macro material for the ensuing musical structures.

The second movement, "*Hoedown (Mad Cow)*," plays on expectations. While a hoedown typically conjures rustic scenes and galloping energy, this interpretation reframes the genre. The subtitle, "Mad Cow", is widely understood as a reference to the 1990s outbreak of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, often called "mad cow disease." During that time, international trade tensions rose as countries restricted beef imports. Adams uses that reference somewhat satirically: the piece becomes a kind of commentary on modern American culture, commercialism, global trade anxieties, and the uneasy undercurrents beneath seemingly wholesome national symbols.

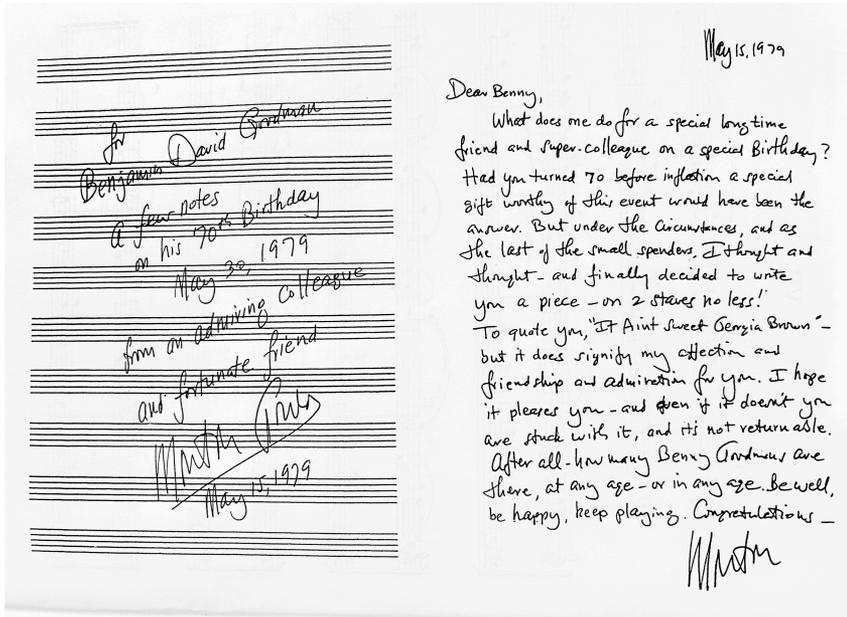
The third movement, "*Put Your Loving Arms Around Me*," begins simply and sweetly, almost like a gentle folk song, gradually unraveling into something more tangled and strained by its conclusion.

**Morton Gould's *Benny's Gig*** is a set of eight short duets for clarinet and double bass by American composer Morton Gould, originally composed in 1962 for jazz clarinet legend Benny Goodman. Seven of the duos were written for Goodman's concert tour of the Soviet Union, and an eighth was added in 1979 for Goodman's 70th birthday. Gould, noted for his versatility as a composer, conductor, arranger, and pianist, wrote these pieces to play to Goodman's strengths in both jazz and classical styles. The duos touch on a variety of popular and stylistic elements that reflect Goodman's broad musical interests, including swing and other rhythmic idioms.<sup>3</sup>

---

3. "Morton Gould, 'Benny's Gig' for Clarinet and Double Bass." SLLMF, accessed February 28, 2026, [https://sllmf.org/archive/notes\\_for\\_549.html](https://sllmf.org/archive/notes_for_549.html).

In performance, *Benny's Gig* movements vary in tempo and character, ranging from brisk, driving passages to relaxed lyrical lines and lightly rhythmic styles such as "Calypso Serenade." The work illustrates Gould's ability to combine jazz-influenced melodic flair with chamber music settings, making it appealing for both players and listeners.



**Figure 1.** Inscription in the autograph/original score of "Benny's Gig" by Morton Gould, dedicating the eighth movement to Benny Goodman on the occasion of Goodman's seventieth birthday.<sup>4</sup>

4. Morton Gould, *Benny's Gig*, (Milwaukee: G. Schirmer, 1980), 16.

**Robert Muczynski's** *Fantasy Trio, Op. 26*, composed in 1969, is a four-movement work for clarinet, cello (or bassoon), and piano. Muczynski, a composer known for his chamber and solo works for winds and piano, wrote the trio to give each instrument distinct roles while maintaining a balanced and interactive ensemble texture. The movements, titled *Allegro energico*, *Andante con espressione*, *Allegro deciso*, and *Andante molto e sostenuto – Allegro*, move between energetic rhythmic writing and expressive, sustained lines.

In his own notes, Muczynski expressed the intention that the trio should not merely feature virtuosic moments but present satisfying interplay among the instruments, alternating clear rhythmic statements with lyrical passages that reflect his interest in jazz-inflected rhythms and mid-20th-century chamber language.<sup>5</sup>

---

5. Susan Elaine Nicholson, "Selected Woodwind Works of Robert Muczynski," 2000, 35-61.

## GUEST ARTISTS



**Dr. Ina Mirtcheva Blevins** has performed across the US and internationally in the Netherlands, Italy, Poland, Bulgaria and Canada. A highly sought after collaborator she frequently performs in the DC area and has accompanied virtually every classical instrument. Dr. Mirtcheva Blevins is a collaborative pianist for the Army Band Tuba and Euphonium workshop as well as the Trombone workshops at Fort Myer in Alexandria, VA. A big promoter of new music she has premiered many solo piano works as well as chamber compositions. She has won many awards including 1st prize in the Schlern International competition in Italy. Dr. Mirtcheva Blevins has been a judge for several solo and concerto competitions for MTNA as well as MCAA, GIA and AAMS competitions. Dr. Mirtcheva Blevins holds degrees from George Mason University as well as University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. Currently she is an adjunct piano faculty at the Dewberry Family School of Music at George Mason University in Fairfax, VA where she teaches applied piano lessons and is the Keyboard Stills Area coordinator. Dr. Ina Mirtcheva Blevins is a recipient of the 1st ever Adjunct Teaching Excellence Award at George Mason University. She is also a Teaching Artist at the Mason Community Arts Academy teaching private and group piano classes (including for people 55+) for over a decade.



**Chris Kosky** has been playing Double Bass and Electric Bass for more than 40 years and loves playing a variety of musical styles. She has a Bachelor of Music, Jazz and Studio Music from the University of Cincinnati's College-Conservatory of Music, and a Master of Music in Jazz Studies from Indiana University. Chris was a member of The United States Air Force Band from 1993-2015, is a life member of the International Society of Bassists, and currently enjoys freelancing and teaching in the Washington, D.C. area. She is the author of a Double Bass method book called *The Thumb Transition Zone*.



**Vivian Podgainy** earned a Master of Music degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music and a Bachelor of Music degree from the Oberlin Conservatory, where she was the winner of the "Music from Oberlin" eight-city tour. Ms. Podgainy worked as a cello performer and teacher based in Cleveland, OH and Hartford CT, as well as Eastern Music Festival in Greensboro, NC. She served in the United States Air Force Band of Washington, D.C. for 26 years, during which time she was Principal Cellist of the Air Force Strings for more than 11 years. Ms. Podgainy performs as a freelance orchestral, chamber and solo musician in the Washington, D.C. area, and teaches cello both at the Harmonia School of Music and Art and in her home studio in Northern Virginia.



**Dr. Ying Zhao** holds a Master of Music and a Doctor of Musical Arts in Piano Performance from Pennsylvania State University, where she also served as a teaching assistant and collaborative pianist. She has performed extensively across the United States and China, showcasing her talents at numerous festivals and competitions. In addition to her performance career, Dr. Zhao is a committed educator, chairing the Bach Baroque Festival and Competition, adjudicating various piano events, and serving on the executive board of the Northern Virginia Music Teacher Association.

## STUDENT BIOGRAPHY



**Julianna Evans** is a graduate of Virginia Commonwealth University, where she received a Bachelor of Music degree, magna cum laude in 1997. During her undergraduate studies, she was the winner of the Virginia Commonwealth University Concerto Competition. She earned a Master of Music degree in 1999 from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. She has also participated in the Cincinnati Chamber Arts Festival and the Aspen Music Festival. Additionally, she was a semi-finalist in the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition. Ms. Evans was a member of The United States Air Force Band in Washington, D.C., 2000-2022, and was appointed Assistant-principal Clarinetist with the Concert Band in 2011. A member of the Music Teachers National Association, she is a sought after clinician and teacher in the Northern Virginia area. With over 25 years of teaching and performing experience, Ms. Evans is committed and dedicated to advancing music education and appreciation to students of all ages.

George Mason University

Reva and Sid Dewberry Family School of Music

For more information and a complete listing of concerts and recitals, visit the web site at [music.gmu.edu](http://music.gmu.edu)



George Mason University is a registered All-Steinway School

This recital is offered in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the  
Doctor of Musical Arts in Clarinet.

The use of cameras and video or tape recorders without prior permission is strictly prohibited. Notice: For your own safety, LOOK for your nearest EXIT.  
In case of emergency, WALK, do not RUN, to that EXIT.

## Works Cited

- Cahill, Sarah. "Adams, John." In *Grove Music Online*. Edited by Mark Alburger. Oxford Music Online, 2001. <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.42479>.
- Gould, Morton. *Benny's Gig*. Milwaukee, WI: G. Schirmer, 1980.
- "John Adams, 'Gnarly Buttons'," in *Program Notes for Gnarly Buttons*, performance by the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Walt Disney Concert Hall, Los Angeles, March 15, 1997.
- "Morton Gould, 'Benny's Gig' for Clarinet and Double Bass." SLLMF.org, 2026. [https://sllmf.org/archive/notes\\_for\\_549.html](https://sllmf.org/archive/notes_for_549.html).
- Nicholson, Susan Elaine. "Selected Woodwind Works of Robert Muczynski." ProQuest Dissertations & Theses, 2000.

