

# DRAGON'S TONGUE



Robert Spring  
Clarinet

Summit  
RECORDS

The pictorial qualities in orchestral music by Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908) are so vivid that it comes as no shock to recall that much of it was written in conjunction with his many operas. In the **Tale of Tsar Saltan** (1890), based on one of the fantastic stories of Pushkin, the hero is shown by a swan how to turn into a bumble bee so as to fly away. This accomplished, Rimsky launched the **Flight of the Bumblebee**, an entr'acte that became a famous orchestral showpiece. This arrangement was intended to feature the entire clarinet section, but the articulation in the solo presentation raises the melody to a new level of virtuosity.

Paul Jeanjean (1874–1928), soloist with the professional band of the French Garde Républicaine and with the orchestra at Monte Carlo, was the composer of ineluctable études for cringing clarinetists. More entertaining, however, are his **Brilliantes variations sur le Carnaval de Venise**, a tune identified by Paganini in his 1829 variation set as a Neapolitan street song with the title *O mamma, mamma care*.

The soloist's part in the **Introduction, Theme and Variations** greatly resembles the coloratura arias Rossini composed for irritable tenors and mezzo-sopranos to sing in his numerous comic and serious operas. The clarinet here reminds us of the essentially vocal origin of the lavish cadenzas, arpeggios and turns that grace such simple melodies as this.

The “other” Franz Schubert (1808–1878) was the violinist-son-of-a-bassist in Dresden, where, except for a period of Parisian study, he spent his entire professional life. Schubert's compositions are now unknown except for the ninth of his twelve Bagatelles originally for violin and piano, dubbed *Die Biene*, The Bee (in French **L'Abeille**) for obvious musical reasons. Circular breathing kept the little creature from resting at any point during this performance.

The late Louis Cahuzac had a marvelous career as a clarinet soloist; compositions by luminaries such as Milhaud, Honegger and Hindemith were written with his artistry in mind. In his **Variations sur un air du Pays d’Oc**, the sturdy theme, though suggested at the outset, is stated by the ensemble only after a spectacular cadenza for the solo instrument. The “air” in question is a traditional song from “the land of oc”—an old term for a wide area in southern France in which the language differences required they reply *oc* rather than *oui*.

Jeanjean again, in his “*Variations acrobatiques et symphoniques*” on **Au Claire de Lune**, dated 1900 – for once we have a work that was actually composed for clarinet and wind band. As much a study in modern harmonizing as in fancy clarinetting, its theme is never stated baldly. Though hinted at during the second part of Mr. Spring’s initial cadenza, it first fully appears embedded in the initial (and unaccompanied) variation. The solemn introduction suggests that its composer approached this cheerful little folk tune with tongue in cheek (when not actually playing, of course.)

Niccolò Paganini’s **Moto Perpetuo** was composed in 1830 for violin and orchestra. Clarinetists again will note the absence of the usual legato articulation. It happened that during the actual recording, the motion was in danger of becoming less than perpetual when Mr. Spring cut his tongue, thus giving new meaning to the phrase “liquid tone”!

Luigi Bassi’s **Concert Fantasia on “Rigoletto”** stands at the center of two musical traditions. Original compositions based on melodies from another work were staples in concert repertoires over the last 150 years, including not only the fantasias of Liszt and other masters but also the more modestly concocted “medleys” that wafted through the humidity at so many a Sunday afternoon band concert in the town parks of yore.

## **Band Personnel**

*Conductor* — Richard Strange

*Piccolo* — Michelle Pitts

*Flutes* — Theodore Doubek, Kay Hamlin

*Oboe* — Lynne Marie Flegg

*Bassoon* — Lindsey M. Bartlett

*Clarinets* — Kelly Johnson, Lisa Oberlander, Alan T. Schultz

*Bass Clarinet* — Anthony Masiello

*Alto Saxophones* — Kevin Gorman, Julie Diane Hoskot

*Tenor Saxophone* — Bryon Ruth

*Baritone Saxophone* — Michael J. Krill

*Horns* — Laurie Matiation, Matthew Monroe,

Robert Rasmussen, Julie Schleif

*Trumpets* — Joseph Burgstaller, John Shaw, Kristin Umbarger

*Trombones* — Gregory Burton, Grant Jordan, Brett Shuster

*Euphonium* — Richard D. Good

*Tuba* — Michael Dunn

*Percussion* — Stacey E. Fox, Arnoldo V. Ruiz

*Producers* — John Mohler, Robert Spring

*Recording Engineer* — Clarke Rigsby

*Administrative Assistant* — Madeline LeBaron

*Digital Mastering* — S.A.E. Digital Mastering Studios, Phoenix, AZ

*Program Notes* — Dr. Wallace Rave

*Cover Art* — Steven Majoros

*Graphics & Typography* — Ralph Sauer



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PUBLISHERS

*Flight of the Bumble Bee*—Ludwig • *Carnival of Venice*—E. Gaudet

*Intro. Theme & Variations*—Oxford Univ. Press • *L'Abeille*—Ed. Musicales Transatlantiques

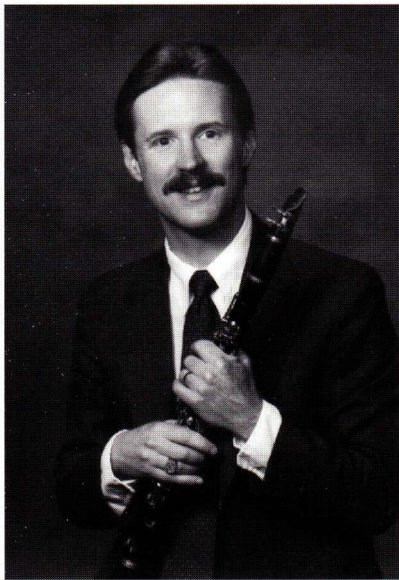
*Variations sur un air du Pays d'Oc*—Leduc • *Au Clair de la Lune*—Alfred Music • *Moto Perpetuo*—Bovaco

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❖ **ROBERT SPRING** ❖

is acclaimed worldwide as a foremost contemporary clarinetist. His performances demonstrate technical mastery far beyond the usual limits of the clarinet, yet he has been described as *one of the country's most sensitive and talented clarinetists* (Arizona Republic). Dr. Spring has published numerous articles on multiple tonguing and other techniques and has appeared as a faculty artist at the symposiums of the International Clarinet Society.

Currently, he is Professor of Clarinet at Arizona State University.

Robert Spring can also be heard on another Summit Compact Disc  
**DCD 124 – JOAN TOWER, Music for Clarinet**

1 Flight of the Bumble Bee  
Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov  
arr. Albert O. Davis [1'18]

2 Carnival of Venice Paul Jeanjean  
arr. C. Fournier [7'12]

3 Introduction, Theme and Variations  
Gioacchino Rossini  
arr. Ralph Hermann [10'41]

4 L'Abeille (The Bee) Franz Schubert  
arr. Mohler [1'18]

5 Variations sur un air du Pays d'Oc  
Louis Cahuzac  
arr. Wayne Pegrum [8'47]

6 Au Clair de la Lune  
*Variations acrobatiques et Symphoniques*  
Paul Jeanjean  
arr. Paul Gogel [10'37]

7 Moto Perpetuo, Op. 11  
Nicolò Paganini  
arr. E. L. Barrow [3'43]

8 Concert Fantasia  
*on Motives from Verdi's Opera "Rigoletto"*  
Luigi Bassi [10'52]  
Arranged for band by L. P. Laurendeau  
Full band score edited by Mark Rogers

Total: [54'56] DDD

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