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Jennifer Showalter, Clarinetist



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Biography

Jennifer Showalter is a versatile professional clarinetist in Los Angeles, California. Her self-produced debut solo CD, *European Adventure*, was released in September of 2009 and has been featured on classical radio stations in the United States and Canada. *Fanfare* magazine featured Ms. Showalter in the July/August 2010 issue and hailed her: "...sheer beauty of tone.", "...technically impeccable.", and "...uncanny sensitivity...". Ms. Showalter has been principal clarinet of many symphony, opera, ballet, chamber, and musical theater orchestras and has performed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Long Beach Symphony, Pacific Symphony, Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, Santa Barbara Symphony, Long Beach Ballet, Symphony in the Glen, California Philharmonic, Asia America Symphony, Pasadena POPS, and the Santa Barbara Chamber Orchestra, as well as many regional orchestras. Ms. Showalter has performed with Civic Light Opera productions at the Ahmanson Theater, the Orange County Performing Arts Center, the Mark Taper Forum, the Schubert Theater and the Thousand Oaks Civic Arts Plaza. She was seen as principal clarinet of the Hour of Power Orchestra, televised weekly worldwide from the world-renowned Crystal Cathedral, for over a decade, performing with soloists such as Roger Williams, Eugene Fodor, John Tesh, and James Galway. Active as a recording artist, she can be heard on various orchestral and chamber CDs and videos. As a soloist and chamber musician, Ms. Showalter has appeared with the Grammy Award-winning Southwest Chamber Music, the Long Beach Symphony Wind Quintet, the Los Angeles Philharmonic Wind Quintet, the North Wind Quintet, and the Lake Avenue Chamber Orchestra. She has also been featured in recital at the Brand Library, the Cerritos Library, the Nixon Library, the Pasadena Library, Biola "Music at Noon", and the "Goldline" series.

Ms. Showalter received her Bachelor of Music Degree in Performance from California State University Long Beach, where she was a student of David Atkins, clarinetist of the Westwood Wind Quintet, and William Powell. Graduating with Great Distinction, Ms. Showalter was elected to membership in Pi Kappa Lambda and Phi Kappa Phi. While earning a Master of Music Degree in Clarinet Performance from Northwestern University, she studied with former principal clarinetist of the Chicago Symphony, Clark Brody, and former principal clarinetist of the Cleveland Symphony, Robert Marcellus, and was the recipient of a Graduate Assistantship. As a scholarship musician at the Music Academy of the West summer festival in Santa Barbara, she studied with noted teacher Fred Ormand. At additional festivals, Ms. Showalter performed in Master Classes for: Sabine Meyer, Larry Combs, Stanley Hasty, and Peter Hadcock. In Los Angeles, she pursued further study with: Gary Gray, Gary Bovyer, Monica Kaenzig, Mitchell Lurie and Steve Roberts. Ms. Showalter is currently pursuing a Professional Certificate in Music Business from Berklee online School of Music.

Ms. Showalter is available to perform on the following clarinets:

- B-Flat Clarinet (Buffet RC Prestige)
- Clarinet in A (Buffet RC Prestige)
- Clarinet in C (Patricola)
- E-Flat Clarinet (Buffet R13)
- Clarinet in D (Leblanc)
- Low C Bass Clarinet (Buffet Prestige)

Critical Acclaim

EUROPEAN ADVENTURE • Jennifer Showalter (cl); Joel Clift (pn)
CD 1001 (56:49) Available from jennifershowalter.com

ARNOLD Sonatina. DEBUSSY Première Rhapsodie. STRAVINSKY 3 Pieces for clarinet solo. BRAHMS Clarinet Sonata No. 2. LOVREGLIO Fantasia da Concerto on Verdi's "La Traviata"

The clarinet is an unforgivingly treacherous instrument. In the wrong hands and lips it can create sounds matching chalk scraping on a blackboard. In the right hands, it can create sounds the subtlety and supple expressiveness of which inspired both Mozart and Brahms. The first thing that struck me in auditioning this release was Jennifer Showalter's sheer beauty of tone. The second was the ease with which she could modulate its colors to the demands of the music. With the contrasting but satisfying sounds of the likes of Stanley Drucker, Gervase de Peyer, Karl Leister, David Shifrin, Emma Johnson, Richard Stoltzman, and Harold Wright ringing in my inner ears, I can say without hesitation that the young Jennifer Showalter belongs in this august company. Singers and all instrumental practitioners share one thing in common—the very sound that they produce, bereft of their interpretative instincts, goes a long way toward defining their appeal, or lack thereof. Some years ago, while discussing the cellist Yuli Turovsky in these pages, I stated that were he playing only scales and arpeggios, the result would be musically arresting. Again, Showalter's sound alone has more than a dollop of this kind of magic.

Her choice of repertoire on this, her first CD, is telling—a mix of the familiar and the obscure; the acerbically minimalist and the lushly Romantic. Of the comparatively little-known, she offers Malcolm Arnold's 1951 Sonatina, op. 29. Arnold is justly renowned for his orchestral music; I found this alternately piquant and lyrically haunting foray into chamber music, composed with clarinetist Frederick Thurston in mind, utterly disarming. Stravinsky's spiky and challenging Three Pieces for clarinet solo, composed in 1919 for Swiss clarinetist Werner Reinhart, presents further challenges for any clarinetist. It breathes the same air as A Soldier's Tale, but with its chamber ensemble boiled down to a single one-line instrumental voice. Here Showalter is verily working without a net, but is fearlessly up to the task. Of Debussy's familiar Première Rhapsodie for clarinet and piano, the best praise I can bestow onto Showalter and her piano collaborator, Joel Clift, is that they sound quintessentially French. This is, indeed, a sweet and beguilingly colorful performance of the piece.

Showalter/Clift's performance of Brahms's op. 120/2 sonata is one of the most ruminative and subtly expressive performances of this warhorse to come my way. The op. 120 sonatas are, to me (if you will excuse my chronological license here), Brahms's parallel to Richard Strauss's Four Last Songs. How the young Showalter found such insights into this profoundly autumnal work—music so full of nostalgia, of Brahms's palpable sense of impending death, and of his bittersweet resignation over it all—can only be chalked up to the miracle of the art of music, and to Showalter's uncanny sensitivity to what its mere notes on paper can convey.

The final piece, Donato Lovreglio's (1841–1907) Fantasia da Concerto, based on motives from Verdi's La Traviata, should, by rights, be a mere piece of musical fluff offered up at the end of

a recital as a sort of musical dessert. It is all that here, but once again, Showalter, in her realization of its moments of touching lyricism, offers so much more.

Throughout this release, her partner, Joel Clifft, is hand in glove with her. Here Clifft, who has made an impressive career as an accompanist, conjures up the ghost of Gerald Moore.

The sound is excellent, easily conveying both Showalter's and Clifft's timbral subtleties. My 800-horsepower system smiled many times in the course of playing this disc, as did I. William Zagorski

This article originally appeared in Issue 33:6 (July/Aug 2010) of Fanfare Magazine.
[William Zagorski - Fanfare Magazine](#) (Jun 8, 2010)

Bravo to Jennifer Showalter on her beautiful playing throughout this CD! I know how challenging it is to play the different styles of Debussy to Stravinsky to Brahms...and she did it all so well. I also really liked the CD design and the extensive program notes. Ms. Showalter can be very proud of how this project turned out and I wish her continued success!"

-Gary Gray, Recording Artist, UCLA, Principal Clarinet, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra (retired)

I find a real musical freshness in Ms. Showalter's playing. She finds the thread to bringing the musical essence out of each work. Her work on the clarinet brings all the elements of each composition together blending the technical and musical aspects into a most satisfying presentation for the listener."

-Ken Grant, Eastman School of Music, Principal Clarinet, Rochester Philharmonic

Ms. Showalter's fresh approach to the featured selections by Arnold, Debussy, Stravinsky, Brahms and Lovreglio shows incredible precision and technique, unsurpassed by others who have attempted such major works. Her fine interpretation and execution of the pieces is right on the mark, as is her rich and velvety tone and balance with the pianist. Each number offers unexpected pleasure to the listener; 'European Adventure' is a total delight."

-Jon Howie, Accompanist

This is a delightful CD of music for clarinet and piano and clarinet solo. The package includes extensive program notes and biographies.

The works chosen for this CD represent a broad spectrum of music for the clarinet. Each is performed to perfection by the artists. Miss Showalter demonstrates a flawless technique and gorgeous tone, with smooth and graceful execution of these difficult pieces -quiet and

meditative at times, or forceful and brilliant, depending upon the mood of the work. The Brahms is especially sensitive. The Lovreglio evokes images of a master cornet virtuoso thrilling a concert audience with a tongue and finger twister. Dr. Clift's accompaniment is crisp and supportive, a pleasure to listen to.

The sound of clarinet and piano is perfectly captured on this CD with correct balance of the two at all times."

-Jim Lathers, Woodwinds

'European Adventure' features an interesting mix of standard favorites and unfamiliar surprises. The Malcolm Arnold 'Sonatina' is an especially delightful discovery that gets better with every listen. Ms. Showalter's beautiful, soaring phrases and Dr. Clift's solid, sensitive accompaniment are wonderfully balanced throughout. An engaging program from start to finish, this CD is a welcome addition to any wind music lover's collection."

-Eric Johnson-Tamai, Bassoonist

'European Adventure' from Jennifer Showalter is a 'must listen' for all my clarinet and woodwind students. Ms. Showalter's exquisite interpretations and flawless technique guarantee a truly rewarding listening experience!"

-John E. Nuñez, Director of Bands, Don Bosco Technical Institute, Band and Jazz Instructor, East Los Angeles College

Great CD! I listen to this on my commute to work. I like the variety. Beautiful work!"

-Carlos Jimenez