Interview with James Tobin
(Music Performance, 1998)

Rebecca J. McFarland: Thanks so much for agreeing to join us the first clarinet studio newsletter interview! Can you start by telling us who you are, and what you do with your time?

James Tobin: I’m James Tobin, I’m a freelance clarinetist, clinician, and instructor based in Charlottesville. I perform with regional symphonies and opera companies, program chamber and solo recitals as my schedule allows, and provide clinics/master classes. The majority of my time is spent teaching my studio, which has around 35 students each year.

RJM: How long did it take you to build your business to what it is today?

JT: I started teaching privately in 2003. At the time I didn’t realize
how much I would enjoy teaching, and I had no idea what positive effects teaching would have on me and my approach to music and life. I’ve had 30-40 students a week since 2011. At this point the studio is largely self-sustaining due to the success of my students. I don’t have a website and I have barely begun a studio presence on social media. I have a lot to improve!

**RJM:** What kind of challenges did you experience during the growth of your studio?

**JT:** This is a hard question to answer. I don’t think anything I’ve tried to do has worked on the first time, ever! Introductory summer group lessons? Never worked. Youth Orchestras of Central Virginia Clarinet Ensemble? First year a dismal failure. Charlottesville Clarinet Workshop? That took four tries for it to work properly. I suspended CCW for several years to raise my kids, and am looking forward to coming back in the fall of 2018. The reality is that many things that you try will not work. The failure provides you with the information you need to succeed. All the other challenges were growing pains of mine: learning how to effectively speak to parents, how to efficiently track payments, what overarching goals I will help my musicians focus on, developing my teaching philosophy, how much my time is worth, and how to be generous with my time and knowledge...yet determining where to draw the line. I learned all of these things by making mistakes!

**RJM:** How did your time in the Virginia Tech Clarinet Studio influence what you do now?

**JT:** I have been lucky in that every one of my teachers has been generous with their time, knowledge, and patience. David Widder provided me an excellent foundation and was patient with me when, as often occurred, my greatest challenges were of my own devising. I was a good player in a studio that had better players. I enjoyed a huge number of performing opportunities early on. Additionally -- there was a broad community of fellow musicians who were serious with their efforts, whether performance/education, and I had the time to learn to emulate them.

**RJM:** If you could go back to the end of your time at VT and give yourself one piece of professional advice, what would it be?

**JT:** Other’s greatness doesn’t diminish your own. Become well acquainted with struggle. Stop being afraid to ask questions.

**RJM:** That brings our first interview to a close! Thanks to James Tobin for his stellar advice and willingness to join us for this first issue!
2016-17 was a busy school year for Virginia Tech clarinet professor Phillip O. Paglialonga. He performed and presented master classes around the world as part of a number of different projects. Professor Paglialonga performed with the PEN Trio in Guatemala at the Centro Municipal de Arte y Cultura - Municipalidad de Guatemala, and was featured on Musica en Transito, TGW (the national classical music station in Guatemala), the Fiesta de los Clarinetes in Havana, Cuba, the International Clarinet Association’s ClarinetFest in Orlando, Florida and the International Double Reed Society’s conference in Appleton, Wisconsin among others. He also did a concert tour of James Whitbourn’s Annaliese for violin, cello, clarinet, piano, soprano and choir in Israel, as well a week-long teaching residency that included a solo recital of electroacoustic works in China. Domestically, he performed a number of concerts including a performance of Rossini’s Introduction, Theme and Variations with the San Luis Obispo Chamber Orchestra in California. Professor Paglialonga served as an adjudicator for the Backun International Clarinet Competition, Bassoon Chamber Music Composition Competition (an international competition soliciting works for trio d’anche this past year), and the International Clarinet Association Research Competition. In June, with funding assistance from the Oleg Prokofief Trust (UK), John Ireland Charitable Trust (UK), Moss Arts Center, and Bruce Carver Multicultural Arts Grant, he recorded a new album with pianist Richard Masters titled In the Time of War, which is scheduled for release on the Heritage Label sometime in 2018.

Highlights from the upcoming 2017-18 season include: a PEN Trio tour in the Midwest with performances at Ball State, Butler University, Western Michigan University and Indiana University in Bloomington; a week-long residency with the PEN Trio at the Universidad de Costa Rica in October; a PEN Trio tour in Arizona that will include performances at the University of Arizona and Arizona State University; featured guest artist at the Troy Clarinet Day (Alabama) and also at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Clarinet Day; a performance at the Kennedy Center of James Whitbourn’s Annaliese; and finally, the PEN Trio will be the ensemble- in-residence at the Alfredo de Saint-Malo Music Festival of Panama in June.

Update From Professor Emeritus Dr. David Widder:

I was fortunate to teach forty great years of bright and talented students at Virginia Tech (that’s each of you!) During that time I was able to perform most of the wonderful solo, chamber and orchestral repertoire of the clarinet. The last few years in retirement have also been great--a little fishing, a little travel, a little clarinet and lots of kids and grandkids. This fall our oldest grandson, Jason is a freshman at VT and member of the
MV trombones. The included photos show the biggest fish caught in retirement and some of my work in the "clarinet closet". Cheryl and I would love to hear from you. I'm still a social media curmudgeon so don't do it that way. Email is still dwidder@vt.edu or text (yes, text!) at 540-239-1812, or call that number or landline 540-951-1669. Address is 1854 Oilwell Rd, Blacksburg, VA 24060.

MV Nets News

by Katie Hale (Music Education, 2017)

Last year, seven of our clarinet studio members had the privilege of being members of the Marching Virginians. However, out of these seven, only three played clarinet in the band! We also had one play trumpet, one play trombone, one that was a manager, and one that was a Senior Staff Assistant! Over the course of the season these members experienced: performing for the largest football game crowd in history (156,990 attendees) at the Battle at Bristol, playing in the stands through Hurricane Matthew at the Virginia Tech vs UNC game, taking a sudden trip to warm, sunny Orlando in December for the ACC Championship, and seeing Arkansas blow their 24-0 lead at the Belk Bowl! In their spare time, they also enjoyed many get-togethers with their respective sections that revolved around food! These events included meals at the one and only Homeplace, Thanksgiving potlucks, and ice cream socials... the studio members cannot resist a good meal, followed by a nap!

While the past season was exciting as always, there is much to look forward to this upcoming season as well! There are four studio members participating in the band this year, including: one playing clarinet, one playing trumpet, one playing trombone, and one Senior Staff Assistant. Their first trip of the season is to FedEx Field to witness the renewal of the Virginia Tech/West Virginia University rivalry! Shortly after they return, the first annual Band Day will come to fruition at the Delaware game, and around 200 high school band students will join in on doing the Hokie-Pokie in Lane Stadium. Later in the season, a pep band will perform at the anniversary of Warm Hearth Village retirement community, the Hokies for the Hungry campaign will try to receive record-setting amounts of canned goods and monetary donations for the Montgomery County Christmas Store, and the band’s fingers are crossed that the season will end with the 14th straight win over UVA, a trip to the ACC Championship, and the bowl game streak becoming 25-years strong!
Yevgeny Dokshansky, Professor, University of Trinidad and Tobago
Tuesday, November 7, 2017 • 2:00pm, Squires Recital Salon
Yevgeny Dokshansky will present a recital with his UTT colleague, percussionist Josh Watkins. Admission is free and no ticket is required.

Sergio Reyes, Principal Clarinet, Sinfónica Nacional de Guatemala
Tuesday, February 13, 2018 • 2:00pm, Squires Recital Salon
Sergio Reyes will perform with pianist Tracy Cowden in a program featuring works from Latin America. Admission is free and no ticket is required.

Jose García-Taborda, Renowned Clarinetist from Medellín, Colombia
Monday, March 26, 2018 • 8:00pm, Squires Recital Salon
Clarinetist Jose García-Taborda and pianist Ana María Orduz-Espinal will perform a recital featuring works from Colombia. Tickets are available online at www.performingarts.vt.edu.

Virginia Tech Wind Ensemble
Jonathan Caldwell, conductor • Joshua Gates, clarinet
Sunday, April 29, 2018• 3:00pm, Moss Arts Center
Clarinet Joshua Gates will be the featured soloist in an adaptation of Messager’s Solo de Concours for clarinet and wind ensemble. Tickets are available online at www.performingarts.vt.edu.

First year clarinet student SETH BOYD (Music Performance and Music Education) participated in the Appalachian Summer Modern Music Festival. The highlight of his time there was playing the solo clarinet part in Aaron Copland's Appalachian Spring for chamber orchestra.

Junior clarinetist SARAH CLARK (Music - Liberal Arts and Public Relations) has spent her summer as a marketing intern at the Bravo! Vail Music Festival. Located in picturesque Vail, Colorado, the festival put on 80 events over 43 days this year, featuring residencies by renowned soloists and chamber ensemble such as the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the New York Philharmonic.
Junior clarinetist **VINCENT DI NARDO** (Music Technology and Computer Science) was awarded the National Leadership Grant from The Order Sons of Italy in America. This summer Vince interned at Microsoft Corporation in Redmond, Washington as an Explorer Intern. This program exposed Vincent to both software development and program management in a corporate context. Vincent worked on source control services, specifically within Office 365, to help increase the productivity of other developers during their build process.

Third year clarinet student **VICTORIA DRIGGS** (Music Education and Psychology) participated in a three-week production and historical study of Gershwin’s rarely performed musical, *Oh Kay*, at Virginia Tech. This opportunity allowed her to delve deeper into the art forms of dance, theater, and singing, while also becoming more historically knowledgeable.

**SARAH EDWARDS** (Curriculum and Instruction, 2014; Performance and Music Education, 2013; Classical Studies, 2013) teaches band at Bailey Bridge Middle School in Chesterfield County. Her pep band recently performed at a home game for the Richmond Kickers! In addition to teaching, Sarah performs with the Richmond Pops Band and the Richmond Clarinet Choir.

Recent graduate **KATIE HALE** (Music Education) has been busy furthering her education at Virginia Tech this summer, as a graduate student in the Education, Curriculum, and Instruction master’s degree program. She is looking forward to working with the Marching Virginians as one of the Senior Staff Assistants this upcoming season, and also to begin student teaching within a local middle school band program this fall.

Fourth year clarinet student **CASSANDRA HANSON** (Music Performance) performed and taught at the Performing Arts Institute at Wyoming Seminary in Pennsylvania this summer. This festival was a unique opportunity that allowed her to perform in the festival orchestra, study with distinguished teacher and performer Lisa Raschiatore, and to work as Dr. Raschiatore’s teaching assistant.

Second year clarinet student **ADRIENNE PATON** (Music Performance and Music Education) attended the 10th International Clarinet festival in Prague, Czech Republic studying with the renowned Czech clarinetist, Ludmila Peterková and Joseph Eller, Professor of clarinet at the University of South Carolina. Along with this, Adrienne worked with the Plymouth-Canton Marching Band in Michigan, serving as a clarinet staff member.
AUSTIN LAPORTA (Music Education and Clarinet Performance, 2015) and is currently working towards her Masters in Arts Management at George Mason University. She is the Executive Director for the Rappahannock Youth Symphony and the first certified Advanced Concepts elementary music teacher at The Merit School located in Stafford, Virginia. She is a member of the Mid-Atlantic Wind Symphony, and this past fall she guest performed with two international orchestras: Musik Schul Orchester and Orchesterverein, in Langen, Germany.

Alum REBECCA JOHNSON MCFARLAND (Music Performance and Music Education, 2013) is a freelance clarinetist working in the Washington D.C. area. She graduated with her MM in Clarinet Performance from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music in 2015, and has maintained a private clarinet studio in Ashburn, VA ever since. Rebecca most recently performed with the Zodiac Music Academy and Festival in Valdeblore, France, and will be presenting a session on teaching clarinet at the Virginia Music Educator’s Association conference this fall.

Alum KELLEY VAETH (Music Education 2012; Curriculum and Instruction 2013) is entering her 4th year as band director at Eagle Ridge Middle School in Loudoun County. Before teaching at ERMS she was the band director at Christiansburg Middle School in Christiansburg, VA. She is looking forward to another great year of music making with her students and hopefully finding time to play her clarinet.

Recent clarinet studio alum KATIE ROCKEFELLER (Music Performance and Music Education, 2016) is a first year teacher at Grace Miller Elementary School, and also works as the assistant marching band director at Liberty High School.

Second year clarinet student GABRIEL WISE (Music Education) studied abroad in Riva, Switzerland and Rome, Italy this summer. The course was taught by Virginia Tech’s Dr. Andrew Becker and Dr. Trudy Harrington Becker. This was a unique opportunity to learn about ancient Roman culture and architecture and how it was an influence throughout Europe for the next two millennium. This allowed him to study ancient Roman and Renaissance churches, visit the museums in Vatican City, and study the ruins of ancient Roman structures in various surrounding cities.

Third year clarinet student HANNAH BEARD (Music-Liberal Arts and Animal and Poultry Science) was recently awarded the Rockbridge County Livestock Scholarship. This scholarship is presented to someone who supports the club’s mission of teaching youth about agriculture and about good farming practice, as well as helping to shape them into responsible citizens and people.
Senior clarinet student **ROBERT BLOOMQUIST** (Music Performance) attended the Aria International Summer Academy in South Hadley, MA this summer. Robert was among students from leading conservatories including Eastman, Oberlin, and Peabody. The ten-day workshop featured lessons, master classes, and the occasional late-night clarinet choir with distinguished faculty from across the United States, including Ken Grant (Eastman School of Music), Jonathan Gunn (University of Texas), Eugene Mondie (National Symphony), Chad Burrow (University of Michigan), Deborah Chodacki (Louisiana State University), and Guy Yehuda (Michigan State University).

Alum **LEE SEIDNER** (Music Education and Music Performance, 2012; Curriculum and Instruction, 2013) is currently in his second year of his doctorate at the University of Miami’s Frost School of Music where he has previously earned an M.M. in Clarinet Performance as well as an Artist Diploma. At the Frost School, Lee is a member of the Frost Symphony Orchestra, the Frost Wind Ensemble, and the Henry Mancini Institute Orchestra while being a Teaching Assistant for the Donna E. Shalala Community Outreach Program. Outside of school, Lee has been a clinician with high school clarinet sections and marching bands throughout Florida, Maryland, and Virginia. Most recently, he performed with Nu Deco Ensemble in Miami and was appointed Adjunct Professor of Clarinet at Miami Dade Community College’s North Campus. When not holding his clarinet, Lee can be found at the front desk of the SoulCycle Coral Gables location as the Senior Keyholder.

Senior Master Sergeant **JOSHUA E. GATES (Music)** is the Superintendent of Logistics for The United States Air Force Academy Band, Peterson Air Force Base, CO. As Superintendent, he is responsible for the deployment readiness, logistics, facilities, and $1.1 million budget of the 60-member squadron in support of the Academy’s national strategic communication objectives. As clarinetist, he leads the Rockies Clarinet Quartet as Noncommissioned Officer in Charge and also performs on clarinet in both the Concert Band and the Marching Band. Over his 18-year career, SMSgt Gates has had assignments at the US Air Forces in Europe Band – Ramstein Air Base Germany, the US Air Forces Central Command Band – Al Udeid Air Base Qatar, and the US Air Force Heritage of America Band – Langley Air Force Base Virginia.
THE ROAD TO CARNEGIE HALL RUNS THROUGH
BLACKSBURG