

2025

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Recommended Citation

Decker, Brad (2025) "Out of the Ground (Into the Sky)," *Journal of the Association for Technology in Music Instruction*: Vol. 5 : No. 2 , Article 11.

Available at: <https://trace.tennessee.edu/jatmi/vol5/iss2/11>

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Journal of the Association for Technology in Music Instruction

Vol. 5, No. 2 (2025)

Out of the Ground (Into the Sky)

Brad Decker, composer
Eastern Illinois University

Eric Mandat, clarinet
Southern Illinois University

COMPOSITION PERFORMED AT

ATMI National Conference 2025
Spokane, WA

ATMI Showcase Concert
Thursday, October 30, 2025

ABSTRACT

Out of the Ground (Into the Sky) was originally composed in 2010 for solo English horn, and is dedicated to my father who passed away suddenly that year. I recently rediscovered this piece, and felt that if this piece was truly a tribute to my father, I should re-write it for Bb Clarinet and computer, as I grew up playing soprano clarinet, and played through my college years. This new version, completed in 2024, is considerably more enhanced, yet contains the same pitch framework of the original. Writing for Bb Clarinet provides more opportunities for contrasts. The clarinet has an amazing range and capacity for dynamics, and provides four distinct voices throughout its range to explore. It also provides amazing spectral properties and an array of unique timbres for the sake of live computer processing.

This piece features a hybrid of live processing and pre-produced cues - both rely solely upon the sounds of the B flat clarinet for sound sources. Live interactivity in this work provides the soloist a sense of flexibility, as they are able to move from cue to cue in a freely elastic way. While the lyrics Nirvana's "Very Ape" (1993) are not about loss or death at all, I found this particular line appropriate for capturing the essence of this work.

The clarinet will perform with a microphone, connected to a Max patch on a laptop. Cues will be controlled either by footpedal by the performer, or by the composer at mix position. A mixture of

live sound, live processing, and fixed media will be sent to the house mix from the laptop and its audio interface.

ABOUT THE COMPOSER

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Brad Decker is a composer, educator, and performer of contemporary concert music, whose works often incorporate electronic, electroacoustic, or interactive media. His recent works explore the interaction of acoustic instruments and electronics to create immersive composite textures. His instrumental works combine virtuosic flourishes, polyrhythmic interplay, and extended techniques. Electronic elements include adventures in analog synthesis, interactive computer processing and sampling, multichannel diffusion, and fixed-media accompaniments. Multimedia projects range from traditional film soundtracks to live-performed improvisations with video. As a double bassist, he regularly performs his own compositions and improvisations that incorporate computer interactivity. His teachers include Peter Hestermann, Kenneth Jacobs, Erik Lund, Heinrich Taube, Steven Taylor, and Scott Wyatt. He has attended masterclasses and lessons with composers Agostino DiScipio, Stefano Gervasoni, Lee Hyla, and Tristan Murail. He is currently Assistant Professor of Composition and Music Technology at Eastern Illinois University. His music is distributed through his website www.braddecker.org.