

# Exploring the World Using a Clarinet

## How IP Enables Composers and Educators

There is a wealth of opportunity when it comes to careers in the music industry. From performers and composers to engineers and educators, most creators start their journey at an early age when they are inspired by a teacher or an experience. The same rings true for Eric Mandat, a clarinetist, composer, and professor at Southern Illinois University.

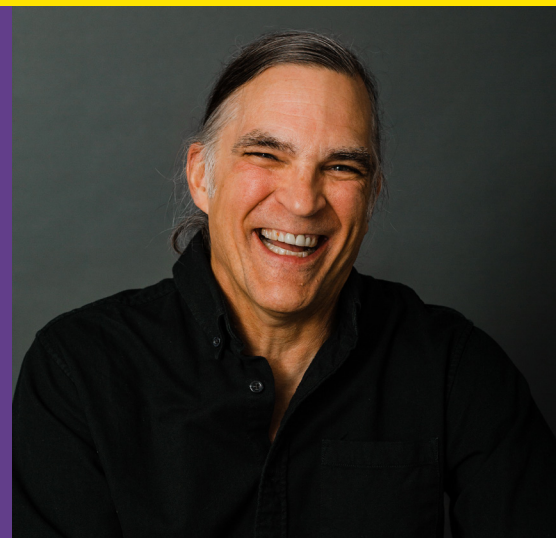
Growing up, Eric's mother played piano, and he fell in love with the clarinet while listening to recordings of various orchestra instruments. He began piano lessons in third grade and clarinet lessons the following year. The personal connections Eric felt with his instructors and colleagues while learning and playing music further fueled his drive toward a career in music. Although he originally wanted to perform professionally, Eric's passion ultimately grew beyond the stage.

In his initial desire to grow as a performer, Eric began learning new performance and improvisation techniques. He also learned to compose music when his piano teacher encouraged him to figure out how to musically notate the little tunes he made up. These experiences led him to a career at the forefront of clarinet extended performance techniques exploration, where he uses original compositions and performances to model and teach a variety of clarinet techniques.

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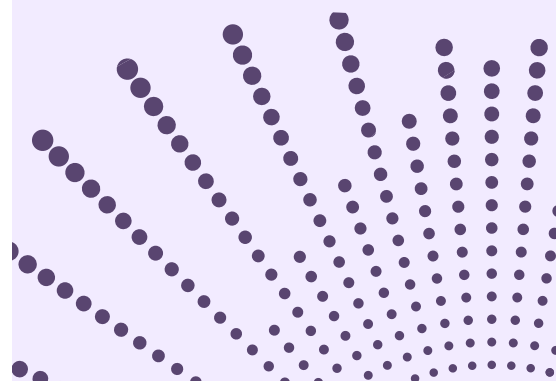
In addition, Eric composed etudes for Illinois' junior and senior high school All-State competition. However, his compositions are not limited to the clarinet and educational materials. They include several pieces commissioned by groups and individuals from around the world, including *Parallel Histories: An Excursion*, commissioned and performed by "The President's Own" United States Marine Band on July 4, 2016.

Eric often finds inspiration for his work in universal elements such as traditional music, speech cadences, and the sounds and rhythms of everyday life. "I want to have my personal experience ultimately translate



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into something more universal.” Music’s ability to connect individuals is very important to creators and consumers alike.

“People probably don’t realize how much music is in their lives. If there isn’t that sound in our ears, sometimes we feel kind of lost. And music tends to enable more complex thought processes. We’re thinking more about concepts because of the intangibility of music. When we listen to something together, we get feelings and have opportunities to discuss things that have nothing to do with the music that we’re listening to. But we are inspired by it. It helps us build connections with each other that are generated by these ethereal concepts embedded in the sounds.”

Although many do not view educators or part-time composers—especially those outside of popular music—as having a career in music, Eric disagrees. “It’s essentially 100% a career in music. I encourage people who are thinking about careers in music not to think about this little niche but to think much more globally.”

Eric says that becoming a professor early in his career gave him the freedom to take chances and explore music in ways he wouldn’t have been able to without a guaranteed and stable income. His desire to showcase what the clarinet could do and formalize certain non-classical practices led him to tour among his network of peers. Over time, he began including some original works in his performances. Although these compositions were meant to highlight and teach techniques, they generated interest in their own rights. This provided Eric with the opportunity to sell his own music.

“Early on, I realized that my audience was small. And I knew my audience better than anyone else who might sell the music. So I self-published from the beginning. I made my own little P2P economy.”

In addition to selling his own sheet music, Eric also offers recordings of his works, using them as a marketing strategy. He puts his music up on sites like Bandcamp or includes CDs with purchases of his sheet music. This often generates interest in other compositions featured on the recording, which leads to greater sales of the sheet music.

For composers like Eric, intellectual property (IP) protections are key, especially in an increasingly digital economy.

“Music is a way of expressing the intangible that we all feel, and the different ways that we communicate those feelings through different kinds of music is an absolute mirror of the different elements in society. The individuality of that expression needs to be protected and safeguarded in every possible way so that those who are creating this kind of interpretation of individuality and universality can be free to express these feelings. The arts need to be protected by IP so that artists who are developing works have protections to say what they need to say.”

Eric set up a business entity for his works early on, registers his copyrights, and maintains a trademark for his publishing company, Cirrus Music. “IP is a really important part of what it is to be a person whose work is primarily from the heart. The written music is a product of many, many hours of contemplation.”

Unfortunately, these creators’ efforts are easily pirated in the digital age and can be downloaded from a variety of sites that may not compensate the original creator. Often, more niche composers utilize direct sales of their works. Eric elaborated, “For my own students, that’s the only way they’re going to see music that isn’t already in the public domain, works created by living composers. They have to get it from the source.” When musicians respect IP rights and acquire contemporary works from legitimate sources, it powers the cycle of creativity and enables these composers to continue creating more options for the musicians who seek them.

The same is true for all creative endeavors. This is why Eric reiterates the importance of IP to all his students. “You want people to support your work, so you have to show them that you respect and support theirs.” He even commissioned the Cirrus Music logo from a former composition student and purchased the graphic design work of another former student for his latest album cover.

The creative community relies heavily on IP rights and the economic opportunities they provide. Respecting and supporting these rights enables creators to grow and share their efforts with the world in a way that promotes the useful arts as intended by the Constitution.

