



**Works for Clarinet and Piano by
Schumann, Debussy, Saint-Saëns,
Poulenc and Arnold**

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Fanfare (Richard A. Kaplan - 2012.08.08)

Arthur Campbell (not to be confused with clarinetists James Campbell or David Campbell) is professor of clarinet at Grand Valley State University in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The opening sentence of the booklet notes reads, "This program begins a journey through the repertoire for clarinet and piano that Campbell and Marlais explore together each season." Well and good, if there weren't dozens of other clarinet recital discs released each year, many of them including much of the repertoire given here.

Do Campbell and his wife, Helen Marlais, bring anything to these pieces that warrants acquisition of yet another clarinet recital CD? In a word, no. Campbell has an attractive enough sound, in a generic way, but his performances are consistently undercharacterized; moreover, there are some technical problems that become troublesome: His trills are too slow, and he has a tendency to blur (dare I say "fudge"?) rapid runs. In the second Schumann piece, he consistently tries to compensate for slow finger technique by starting the most difficult triplet figure too soon, which hardly helps. And, in the Lento of the Saint-Saëns sonata, he overblows the sempre f opening section in the lowest register of the instrument, and his frequent gasps for air become distracting. Stick with David Shifrin, Jonathan Cohler, and the young Anna Hashimoto in this repertoire.