

# Song for Eric

For bass clarinet solo



Photo: Eric Stewart, Esquire Magazine

**Michael Fiday**  
**2021**

## Program notes

*"Usually, when a man dies, you remember—or you say you remember—only the good things about him. With Eric, that's all you could remember. I don't remember any drags he did to anybody. The man was absolutely without a need to hurt."*

Charles Mingus

*Song for Eric* was commissioned by Bang on a Can and was composed for bass clarinetist Jeff Anderle, who premiered the work during one of Bang on a Can's live, online Marathon Concerts on April 18, 2021. Receiving the opportunity to compose for bass clarinet (one of my favorite instruments) immediately directed my thoughts to the music of Eric Dolphy, the great multi-instrumentalist well-known for his pioneering work establishing and expanding the possibilities of the bass clarinet as a jazz instrument. *Song for Eric* is a two movement work that takes its cue from his famous bass clarinet rendition of the Holiday/Herzog standard *God Bless the Child*. The first movement is a simple, lyrical expression honoring the memory of one of the great jazz instrumentalists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The second movement, *Song for Eric (reprise)*, is a varied and rougher-edged restatement of the first movement, as if the first movement had passed through the filter of Dolphy's own sound world. The two movements may be played together in succession, independently, or at different points within a program. (An ideal scenario is to play the first movement, followed by a performance of Dolphy's version of *God Bless the Child*, followed by a performance of the second movement reprise.)

Duration: c. 3 minutes

MF

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## I. Song for Eric

Slow, lyrical: ♩ = 48

*p*

*hushed, like an echo*

5 *p* *pp* *sim. p* *mp*

9

*flowing, graceful*

11 *mp* *p* *mf* *f*

14 *p* *pp* *hushed*

19 *p* *mp*

23 *mf*

## II. Song for Eric (reprise)

Moderato; lyrical, with grit: ♩ = 60

Play

(trem.)

Sing \*

*p* *p* *mp*

\* Singing part transposed, same as bass clarinet.

Male players: sing in octave written as much as possible.

Female players: sing octave above or octave written at your discretion.

5

7

5

3

*p* *pp*

10

*p*

13

7

5

5

*mf* *p*

16

5

3

*pp*