*Open Spaces* for clarinet and piano was commissioned by Alex Ladstätter in 2013. The title captures the atmosphere generated by the composition’s main theme. Pensive, large-interval clarinet phrases separated by silences evoke the vast expanse of geographical areas such as the American West.

The piece moves back and forth between developments of the almost meditative main theme and “traveling music”, which moves the listener from one point to the next within the seemingly borderless landscape. These sections are driven by a variety of rhythmic grooves established by the piano.

Occasionally the composition also takes on a more urban element, represented by harmonic language typical for the second Viennese school colored by jazzy touches. But overall *Open Spaces* is a journey through wide open territory, engagingly narrated by an eloquent and multi-faceted clarinet.

Gernot Wolfgang

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