

# SCHERZO

Interviews with the notable musicians & fascinating personalities of our day

with WESLEY FERREIRA

## ROBERT SPRING

*A world-famous clarinet virtuoso with several pioneering record albums to his credit and an over 30-year legacy of performing and teaching as clarinet professor at Arizona State University, Robert Spring sits down to answer some questions.*

**If you could have lunch with any human being in history, who would it be and what would you want to know?** Johann Christoph Denner – did you really mean to invent a new instrument?

**What's the hardest part about being a musician?** Practicing daily. I've done this since 1966!

**What really makes you laugh?** Bad puns, and bad lessons when you and your student just fall apart laughing.

**What's always in your bag?** My Micro reed clipper. I only know of two of these, mine and the one John Mohler had.

**What do you love most about your life right now?** Freedom! I can perform any and all styles of music. I'm also old enough to do what I want in music and not care what others think.

**What is your secret to being productive?** I believe that everyone is given a gift in life. It is your role in the world to use this gift. To not do so is, in my opinion, a sin.

**If you were given a million dollars right now, what would you do with it?** Help my daughter and son-in-law get started in life, and make sure my brothers were ok for the rest of their lives.

**What is your best habit, and what is your worst?** Best... I'm very driven and I love to work, teach, and be creative. Worst... I like cigars!

**How do you handle email?** Do it all at the end of the day. Start at the latest and work backwards. Often things that were big problems at 6:00am are solved by the time you get to them!

**How do you wind down at the end of the day?** Netflix and single malt.

**What is your favorite gadget or piece of equipment in your home?** Alexa – "Alexa, turn on the living room."

**What advice are you glad you ignored?** Don't go into music – there's no money in it. It was from a music teacher and it was wrong!

**What's the worst performance experience you've ever had?** L'Histoire du Soldat at ASU many years ago. I narrated the devil part as well as playing the clarinet part. I blew the opening passage on both the first time and the repeat. Don't think I got any of the notes!

**How do you know when you're finished with a practice session?** Brain stops... can't think and don't remember what I just did.

**What do you think is the biggest accomplishment in your career so far?** My students' successes.

**What's your favorite city in the world?** London, England.



**What's the one thing you learned in college that you wish you had listened to?** You need to realize that there are hundreds of other people doing the same thing you are, and you need to be the best.

**Do you have a necessary vice?** Coffee!

**Is there a meal you fantasize about?** Lobster.

**What is your favorite quote?** "It's a pretty good crowd for a Saturday, and the manager gives me a smile, 'cause he knows that it's me that they're coming to see to forget about life for a while."  
- Billy Joel, "Piano Man"

# CODA

**If you weren't a clarinet player, what would be your profession?**  
Architect.

**If you had to describe yourself in three words, which ones would you choose?**  
Family, Teacher, Musician.

**If you could cast someone to play you in a movie, who would it be?**  
Robert Redford!

**If you ruled the world, what's the first thing you would change?**  
Eliminate all nuclear weapons.

**If you had a superpower, what would it be?**  
ESP.

**If you were to pick what is inscribed on your gravestone, what would it be?**  
He cared about people.