

# Deconstructing Victor by David Schumacher

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*Deconstructing Victor* was commissioned by, and written for, Joshua Thomas of the US Coast Guard Band. Josh approached me with the idea to write a sequel to his 2007 commission, *Deconstructing Eddie* – a heavy metal inspired piece I wrote for solo saxophone based on the music of Eddie Van Halen. The goal of the *Deconstructing* series has always been to make use of the idiomatic elements of a given genre or specific musician to write a modern, virtuosic piece that wouldn't alienate a general audience. Something that could remain accessible to the listener, yet provide a serious challenge for the performer. With *Deconstructing Eddie*, Josh and I instantly connected over Eddie Van Halen, since we had both grown up in awe of his outlandish guitar solos. In deciding which musical pioneer would inspire the sequel, I turned Josh on to the music of virtuoso bassist Victor Wooten. A few YouTube videos later and Josh was sold on the idea.

I found a book from the Cherry Lane Music Company with a mix of his solo works and those of Béla Fleck and the Flecktones meticulously transcribed by Victor Wooten himself. After weeks of listening and analyzing Victor's playing, several distinctive elements and approaches emerged. I was interested to hear that among them were the same Baroque influenced devices and homages to Bach as I had discovered in Eddie Van Halen's playing. Who says theme and variation can't groove?!

Conceptually, *Deconstructing Victor* is the same as its predecessor. To highlight the distinctive and consistent threads of the musician from whom I've taken inspiration – in this case Victor Wooten, I make informal use of a technique derived from the 20<sup>th</sup> century French philosopher Jacques Derrida that has become popular in today's over-televized culinary circles: deconstruction. Although the term originally referred to "a form of philosophical and literary analysis...that questions the fundamental conceptual distinctions, or 'oppositions,' in Western philosophy through a close examination of the language and logic of philosophical and literary texts" according to Britannica.com, pop culture has morphed it into a method of isolating the components of a commonly-accepted whole to see how those elements relate outside that whole. In FoodTV-speak, taking the ingredients of a Caesar salad (lettuce, anchovy, egg yolk, and shaved Parmesan) and presenting them in separate piles on a plate.

Employing the gracefully unfolding development and minimalist approach to material that are integral to Victor Wooten's style, I explore the dichotomy of soulful groove and ethereal beauty I found captivating in his music. Though this piece certainly has its moments of virtuosity, *Deconstructing Victor* is more about emotion and nuance, than the pyrotechnic audacity of *Eddie*. However, as with *Deconstructing Eddie*, this piece is not about clever abstractions and subtle derivation. It's meant to be a fun, clearly derivative, over-the-top work that pushes the limits of the performer and inspires a little "air bass" from the listener. This one's for all of us who have ever wanted to get our groove on!

Many other works of various style, instrumentation, and level of difficulty are available from this composer. Commissions for new works, orders for existing works, and information about guest artist residencies should be directed to David Schumacher: [www.davidschumacher.com](http://www.davidschumacher.com) • [stroderode@earthlink.net](mailto:stroderode@earthlink.net) • 617-970-1177.

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