

The Alto Trombone: Evolution as a Chamber Music Instrument in Selected Works from the Baroque to the Twentieth Century

By
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Abstract

Starting in the Renaissance, the alto trombone was considered by many to be a sacred consort instrument that doubled the voices in church choirs or performed independent parts in church music. In the Baroque period, the alto trombone became a chamber instrument that was used as an *obbligato* instrument paired with voice, which composers of Vienna started the trend in accompanying voice. This gradually decreased in the classical period as the instrument was incorporated into orchestral music. The composers of the Romantic era used the alto trombone rarely except in some orchestral literature, but this diminished over time as the tenor trombone proved more versatile than the alto trombone. When chamber music works from the Baroque era were rediscovered in the 20th century, the alto trombone experienced a revival and gained popularity with composers of the 20th century. The alto trombone was used as the highest tessitura voice in chamber music from the 20th century, which gave it a role as a soloist in chamber works from this time.

This document examines how the alto trombone has evolved in chamber music from being an *obbligato* instrument that accompanied vocal lines in the Baroque period, to having a less important role as an *obbligato* instrument with voice in the Classical period, became nearly obsolete in the Romantic period, and developed into an essential instrument in chamber works of the twentieth century. Through the musical works of Franz Ignaz Tuma, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Malcolm Forsyth, Virgil Thomson, Alfred Hornoff, and Donald Appert, this document examines each work by including an analysis of the alto trombone part, how it fits into the chamber work, and provides information on the historical context of the work and composer.

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Introduction

During the 16th century, the alto trombone was considered by many to be a chamber music instrument performing regularly in courts, town bands, and churches throughout Europe. In churches, the alto trombone performed along with the tenor trombone doubling voices in choirs. The alto trombone is pitched in the key of E-flat or D and is capable of playing in a higher tessitura than the tenor trombone. Being that the instrument is smaller in size, it produces a lighter sound.

In the 17th to 18th centuries, the alto trombone remained a chamber music instrument, progressed into a solo instrument, and was the upper voice of the trombone section in orchestral music. In chamber music, the alto trombone became a popular instrument among Viennese composers. Johann Josef Fux (1660-1741) was responsible for using the alto trombone as an *obbligato* instrument in over 200 of his sacred compositions with voice.¹ As Fux was an influential composer at the time, other Viennese composers adopted this compositional trend.

By the Classical period (1750-1820), the *obbligato* alto trombone became obsolete in chamber music and by the mid-late 1800s it was rarely used. In the 20th century, however, a revival of the alto trombone inspired composers to include the instrument in various chamber ensembles including, trombone trios, quartets, brass quintets, and string quartets. This document examines how the alto trombone evolved in chamber music from the Baroque period to the 20th century, through the musical works of Franz Tuma, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Alfred Hornoff, Malcolm Forsyth, Virgil Thomson, and Donald Appert.

¹ The term *obbligato* refers to an important instrumental part that is indispensable to a piece and should not be omitted. Michael Kennedy, "Obbligato," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Musical Terms*, 2nd ed., ed. Joyce Bourne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 631.

Baroque

Franz Ignaz Tumã
Inno per il Festo di St. Teresia

Franz Ignaz Tumã was born on October 2, 1704 in Bohemia and is primarily known for his sacred choral and instrumental compositions. Early in his life, Tumã studied music with his father who was an organist. According to Theodore Milton Klinka, many of the details of Franz Tumã's early years are unknown; however, sources references to his ability as vocalist and performer on the viola da gamba and the theorboe.² While receiving a degree in philosophy at the Jesuit Seminary in Prague, Tumã studied with the organist and composer, Bohuslav Matěj Černožský (1684-1742). During this time, Tumã served as a chorister and instrumentalist at Prague's church of St. James.

Tumã was one of the many Czech composers to leave Bohemia (now the Czech Republic) to immigrate to Vienna after earning his degree in 1722. The emperors ruling Vienna between 1637 and 1740 were largely responsible for the city's rise to international musical fame and influence.³ The rulers of Vienna were patrons of the musical arts, supporting it financially, encouraged its growth, and even participating in musical events as performers or composers. While in Vienna, Tumã studied composition with Johann Josef Fux (1660-1741), who at the time was the Viennese court composer of Charles VI. Tumã studied the techniques of counterpoint created by Fux, regarded as the master of counterpoint, and was known as the only composer capable of imitating Fux.⁴ By 1741, Tumã was appointed as court composer and conductor of the orchestra of Empress Elizabeth Christine, widow of Emperor Charles VI.

² Theodore Milton Klinka. "The Choral Music of Franz Ignaz Tumã with Practical Edition of Selected Choral Works" (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 1975), 16, ProQuest AAT 7523057.

³ Ibid., p. 14.

⁴ Milan Pořtolka, "František Ignác Antonín Tuma," in *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2007-2016), accessed May 18, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.www2.lib.ku.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/28573>.

She provided financial support to the *Kapelle*,⁵ as well as opportunities for Tumå to continue composing and performing.⁶ Tumå was in charge of 17 musicians, including two trombonists, Wenzel Thomas and Anton Ulbrich. After Empress Elizabeth Christine's death in 1756, Tumå was awarded a pension which enabled him to become a freelance musician and composer until his death in Vienna, on January 30, 1774.

During his lifetime, Franz Tumå composed 176 works for voice scored SATB. His instrumental compositions consist of a total of 47 works, including 8 partitas, 16 sonatas, 13 sinfonia, as well as masses, settings of Vespers, motets, Litanies, and Magnificats. In his vocal and instrumental works, he incorporated instrumental introductions, interludes, concerto procedures, extensive use of both vocal and instrumental solos, displays vocal virtuosity, and cantata-like divisions of the text.⁷ The style of his works is described as *stile antico* and *stile modern*. *Stile antico* refers to Tumå's use of an older compositional style; whereas, *stile modern* refers to his use of a newer compositional style. During Tumå's time, composers were trained in the 'old style' of composing based on the composition style of Palestrina. As a result, many composers, including Tumå, incorporated both 'new' and 'old' elements into their works.

Inno per il Festo di St. Teresia (1741)

*Regis superni nuntia
Domium Paternam deseris terris
Teresia barbaris
Christum datura aut sanguinem
Christum datura, datura Sanguinem
Sit laus Patricum Filio
Et Spiritu Paradyto tistique,*

*Messenger of the King on high,
you, Theresa, are leaving your house
for barbaric lands,
about to give up
anointed blood.
Praise be to the father,
with the son and the Holy Spirit and to you,*

⁵ German term for the staff of clergy and musicians associated to a royal chapel. Michael Kennedy, "Kapelle," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Musical Terms*, 2nd ed., ed. Joyce Bourne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 460.

⁶ Klinka, "Choral Music of Franz Ignaz Tumå with Practical Edition of Selected Choral Works" (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 1975), 20, ProQuest AAT 7523057.

⁷ Franz Tumå, *Inno per il Festo di St. Teresia*, ed. by Stephen C. Anderson (Stephan Anderson, 1984), i.

*Santua Trinitas,
Nunc et per omne saculum.
Amen.*

*Holy Trinity,
Now and through every age.
Amen.*

In 1741, Tumå composed *Inno per il Festo di St. Theresia* for alto voice, alto trombone, two violins, organ, and basso continuo. The Latin text is based on a hymn traditionally performed during Vespers and Matins. The work's form consists of two sections that differ in meter and tempo. Tumå labels the first section *tempo moderato*, which is in common time. Originally, Tumå did not include an approximate tempo of each section, though pedagogue and trombonist Stephen C. Anderson suggests, a tempo of eighth note = 88 in his 1984 edition.⁸ The alto trombone introduces the melody with violin and basso continuo accompaniment. In measure 7, the alto voice sings the hymn melody with accompaniment by alto trombone, violins, and basso. While the alto vocalist performs hymn, the trombone acts as an *obbligato* instrument, because it interjects with supporting melodic motives. At measure 27, the vocal line ends and the alto trombone proceeds with the same melody presented as the solo in measures 1-7.

In the second section of the hymn, marked *Allegro*, the time signature changes to triple meter with eighth note = 112. The first and second violins perform a canonic duet with basso continuo accompaniment to a repeated melismatic *Amen* sung by the alto vocalist. The first violin enters this section at measure 34 to introduce the melody, while the second violin enters in the following measure with the same melodic motive a perfect fifth below. This violin duet continues until measure 47 when the alto soloist and alto trombone continue in the same manner, imitating the previous entrances. As the melody passes between the voice and alto trombone, the violins interject short accompaniment motives. Though the voice and alto trombone are prominent parts, the violins imitate melodic material similar to the beginning of this section.

⁸ Stephen Anderson, *Inno per il Festo di St. Teresia* by Franz Ignaz Tuma (Stephan Anderson, 1984), i.

During the Baroque period, the alto trombone and violin were common *obbligato* instruments in works by Austrian composers. In his doctoral dissertation on trombone *obbligato* with voice from the 17th and 18th centuries, David Ross Mason writes, “Italian influence in the Austrian courts combined with the Austrian preference for the trombone as a sacred instrument to produce a large number of works for solo trombone *obbligato* with voice.”⁹ Consequently, technical demands of trombonists increased during this period. Historian David Guion believes this practice began with Fux and proceeded with the generation of composers following Fux.¹⁰ It would make sense that Tumå used the alto trombone as an *obbligato* instrument because he studied with Fux during his time in Vienna. Fux was influential on many composers at the time and Tumå followed his compositional trend of using the alto trombone in an *obbligato* role supporting voice.

In Tumå’s *Inno per il Festo di St. Teresia*, the alto trombone functions as a soloist, accompaniment, and an *obbligato* instrument. The introduction in measures 1 through 7 is an alto trombone solo introduction, imitating the hymn melody beginning in measure 7. In measure 7, the alto vocalist performs the hymn tune “Inno per il Festo di St. Teresia” while alto trombone functions as accompaniment, interjecting short motives that imitate the vocal melody. At measure 27 through 33, the alto trombone performs once again the solo introduction melody to close this section.

In the second section, the alto trombone assumes an *obbligato* role. At measure 48 the alto voice begins the duet, and one measure later, is joined by the alto trombone. The alto trombone part is essential to this section, because without it there is interrupted flow in the melody creating disconnection in the sound. The *Allegro* section is the *Amen* chorus stated in the vocal text, which explains the duet between the alto voice, alto trombone, and the violins. Stephen C. Anderson states in his *International*

⁷ David Ross Mason. “Trombone obligatos with voice in the Austrian sacred music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: Representative excerpts with historical introduction and commentary” (DMA diss, University of Cincinnati, 1997), 10, ProQuest 9824632.

⁸ David Guion. *The History of the Trombone* (London: Yale University Press, 2006), 145.

Trombone Association Journal article that this section is a great example of Tumå's "exquisite and delicate handlings" of voice and instruments in the *concertato* style because the alto trombone is as equally important as the vocalist.¹¹ After the alto trombone and voice enter, they are the only melodic moving parts with basso continuo accompaniment. Throughout this section, the alto trombone imitates the voice in one measure segments that answer the vocal part or perform in unison with the vocalist.

Tumå's work presents the performer with challenging balance issues between the instruments and voice. The alto trombonist, as the only brass instrument in the chamber ensemble, must play under the voice and strings. The range of the alto trombone part is narrow being only an octave and a half (G to c²). With regards to technical issues, Tumå has written trills in the trombone part, which can be easily played as a lip trill or with a trigger.

Classical

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
"Jener Donnerworte Kraft" from *Die Schuldigkeit des Ersten Gebotes*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) composed numerous compositions in every major genre of his time including, symphonies, piano concerti, piano sonatas, string quartets, arias, serenades, divertimenti, operas, and a requiem. In 1762-1773, Wolfgang and his sister, Maria Anna (Nannerl) were renowned child prodigies of piano and violin. They toured with their father, Leopold, throughout Europe showing off their musical talents in the public including, the homes of aristocrats, and important figures, such as Empress Maria Theresa in Vienna and the Archbishop of Salzburg, Sigismund von Schrattenbach. The Archbishop heard of the composing talents of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart but was skeptical of his abilities. Suspicious of young Mozart's abilities, the Archbishop of Salzburg allegedly arranged for the young prodigy to be locked up in solitary confinement while he set the words to a short

¹¹ Stephen Anderson, "The Soloistic Use of the Alto and Tenor Trombones in the Choral Music of Franz Ignaz Tumå", *International Trombone Association Journal*, vol. 14, no. 3 (July 1986): 48-49.

oratorio.¹² Successfully completed the test, Mozart was commissioned by the Archbishop to write the first part of the oratorio, *Die Schuldigkeit des Ersten Gebotes*, K. 35 in December 1766, in honor of the Archbishop's anniversary.

Die Schuldigkeit des Ersten Gebotes, K. 35 (*The Obligation of the First Commandment*) was first performed on March 12, 1767 in the Knight's Hall of the Archbishop of Salzburg's. The work consists of three parts written by separate composers.¹³ Part one of this work was composed by Mozart while parts two and three were composed by Michael Haydn and Anton Adlgasser. Only part one survives; the others were lost. The libretto was written by Ignaz Anton Weiser, a businessman and mayor of Salzburg (1772-1775). The text is based off a biblical story found in the Gospel of Mark: "And thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy, and all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment."¹⁴

The characters consist of a half-hearted Christian man (*Der Christ*), and three Biblical figures: The Spirit of Christianity (*Der Christgeist*), Divine Justice (*Gerechtigkeit*), and Divine Mercy (*Barmherzigkeit*). In part one, the biblical figures work together to show the half-hearted Christian what the future holds if his lack of spirituality continues. The music of this oratorio, or sacred Singspiel, reflects the influence of Italian operas on Mozart's compositional style, which he was exposed to as a young child in the courts of Salzburg. Although this work precedes his later dramatic work, *Apollo et Hyacinthus*, it includes a full da capo aria and dramatic dialogue.¹⁵

¹⁰ Ian Page, liner notes to Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Die Schuldigkeit des Ersten Gebotes*, Classical Opera, Signum Classics SIGCD343, 2010, compact disc.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Cliff Eisen, "Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart," in Grove Music Online (Oxford University Press, 2007-2016), accessed June 4, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.www2.lib.ku.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/40258>.

Another influence on young Mozart was the music of Johann Ernst Eberlin (1702-1762). When Mozart was a young boy, he studied music by copying pieces into his notebook, including thirteen of Eberlin's works. Wolfgang and his father both admired Eberlin's work and referred to him as "a thorough and accomplished master of the art of composing".¹⁶ One can argue that the works of Eberlin were used as a model for young Mozart's oratorio *Die Schuldigkeit des Ersten Gebotes* because Eberlin also used alto trombone *obbligato* writing in two of his six oratorios. *Obbligato* trombone was an Austrian tradition but became obsolete during Mozart's later years. Later in his life, Mozart rarely used trombones except in his operas believing that the instrument symbolized the supernatural. In Wayne W. Wells' DMA dissertation, "Music for Trombone and Voice from the Hapsburg Empire", he explains Eberlin's influence on Mozart by providing an example of Mozart's aria *Fliess o heisser Tränenbach*, a da capo aria from the oratorio *Die Verurteilte Jesus*, which uses prominent lyrical solos to open and end the compositions.¹⁷

"Jener Donnerworte Kraft" from *Die Schuldigkeit des Ersten Gebotes*
 Libretto by Anton Weiser¹⁸
 Text: German

*Jener Donnerworte Kraft
 die mir in die Seele dringen,
 fordern meine Rechenschaft.*

The force of those thundering words
 which invade my soul,
 calls for my reckoning.

*Ja mit ihren Widerhall
 hört mein banges Ohr erklingen
 annoch den Posaunenschall.*

Yes, as they reverberate
 my fearful ear can still hear resounding
 the sound of the Last Trumpet.

"Jener Donnerworte Kraft," from the oratorio *Die Schuldigkeit des Ersten Gebotes*, is the sixth aria in the work featuring tenor soloist (*Der Christ*), alto trombone, two violins, two violas, cello, and

¹⁶ Wayne W. Wells, "Music for Trombone and Voice from the Hapsburg Empire: An Historical Overview with Tenor Trombone Transcriptions" (DMA diss, University of Maryland, 2005), 47, ProQuest 3312194.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸ Ian Page, liner notes to Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Die Schuldigkeit des Ersten Gebotes*, Classical Opera, Signum Classics SIGCD343, 2010.

bass. In the modern edition by Ken Shifrin, there is an optional piano reduction by Robert E. Willis that replaces the strings. The text of this aria declares the Christian's fearful reaction to the warnings given by the Last Trumpet, which is represented by the alto trombone. Similarly, Mozart uses the tenor trombone to represent the Last Trumpet in "Tuba mirum" from *Requiem*. In regards to the trombone, Mozart only used them in his operas and sacred works, and regarded the instrument as "a source of sensation, to be used sparingly, but then with stunning effect."¹⁹ The text of "Tuba mirum" also explains the warnings of the Last Trumpet, which makes sense in why he used the trombone in both works. In addition, the alto trombone supports the tenor soloist in a lyrical, legato style as accompaniment and *obbligato*. Though the alto trombone is used in a previous recitative, "Jener Donnerworte Kraft" is the only movement in which the instrument plays a significant role.

The beginning of this aria is a 24 measure instrumental introduction alto trombone solo with string accompaniment. This alto trombone solo is the longest solo passage for the instrument in this piece. As mentioned, Mozart uses the alto trombone to represent the Last Trumpet (*Posaunenschall*) and has included short solo sections to imitate that effect. After the introduction, the tenor soloist (*Der Christ*) opens the A section with the melody, while the alto trombone becomes a supporting voice, along with the strings. Though the alto trombone functions as a supporting voice, Mozart wrote short solos and four instances of trills, which indicated Mozart intended for the alto trombone to be an *obbligato* instrument. In performance, the vocalist and trombonist both have unison cadenza-fermatas included in the parts, but in many performance recordings the vocalist performs at least two of these cadenzas alone. Although Mozart did not write cadenzas out, performance recordings indicate the alto trombone and tenor soloist improvise the cadenzas during the fermata trills.

In the B section beginning at rehearsal letter D, the text declares that the Christian is fearful and he can hear the call of the Last Trumpet. Though the alto trombone performs accompaniment figures, it

¹⁹ Paul Johnson, *Mozart* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2013), 40.

also imitates the tenor soloist's two measure phrases to represent the echo of the last trumpet. This is another example of the alto trombone being used as an *obbligato* instrument, because the trombone and voice are equally important. True to a da capo aria, the A section and the first verse of the text are repeated.

Performing considerations of this work include balancing the ensemble so that the alto trombone does not play above the strings, including the muted violins, and the vocalist. As this is a Classical work, it must be performed in a lighter style that is typical of the period. Since a vocalist is included in the ensemble, the dynamic markings are *piano* and *pianissimo* much of the time. This makes it difficult for the alto trombonist to sustain a resonant tone. In comparison with the previous work by Franz Tuma, the alto trombone part of "Jener Donnerworte Kraft" is less technical but also has a few challenging elements, such as trills and *piano* dynamic markings in the accompanimental sections after rehearsal letter A.

Romantic

In the nineteenth century, the alto trombone was rarely used due to the expansion of the orchestra, which demanded a larger, more unified sound. As composers increased the instrumentation of orchestral compositions, the lighter sound of the alto trombone was not ideal. Trombonist William Kimball explains, "Stephen Anderson says it resulted from the alto's limited capacity for volume, its limited range, especially compared to the tenor trombone, as well as from the advent of the valved horn, which, according to Anderson, filled the role of the alto trombone."²⁰ In chamber music, the earliest known work to include the alto trombone representing the late Classical and early Romantic style is Ludwig von Beethoven's *Drei Equali für Posaunen Quartett* (1812). Otherwise, the alto trombone was

²⁰ William Kimball, "Alto Trombone Solo Literature: An Annotated Bibliography" (DMA diss., Arizona State University, 2001), 6.

only used on occasion in the orchestra and was not considered as a solo or chamber music instrument. Hector Berlioz (1803-1869), one of the leading composers of the Romantic period, used the alto trombone in his early works with the upper trombone part notated in alto clef, at least until the composition of *Harold en Italie*.²¹ Berlioz demanded the alto trombone be used in several of his early works. In Hugh MacDonald's translation of Berlioz's treatise on orchestration, MacDonald mentions an early instrumentation list of *Symphonie Fantastique* which Berlioz states, "The alto trombone part must not be played on a big trombone, as is often done in France: I demand a true alto trombone."²² In addition, Berlioz demands alto trombone for the upper trombone parts in *Messe solennelle*, *Scène héroïque*, *La mort d'Orphée*, the *Waverly* and *Roi Lear* overtures, *Cléopâtre*, and *Lélio* (1832).

After 1835, Berlioz began writing his upper trombone parts in tenor and bass clefs, with the intention that they be played on tenor trombone. As the tenor trombone was favored for its sound, orchestras in France at this time, no longer used the alto instrument for the upper parts of the trombone section. In later compositions, Berlioz specified tenor trombones in his *Requiem* (1837) and other later works. In addition, Berlioz recommends alto or tenor trombone for the first parts to *Roméo et Juliette* and *Symphonie funèbre et triomphale* because the range only extends to c² and d². Generally, Berlioz's alto trombone parts extend to e-flat², which is in the highest register of the tenor trombone. As a result, trombonists should play the part specified for the actual alto trombone because reaching e-flat² is easily achieved.

Other Romantic composers, such as Franz Schubert (1727-1829) and Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) used the alto trombone in their symphonies as the highest voice of the trombone section. Brahms, in particular, was highly influenced by Beethoven, who followed the tradition of scoring alto, tenor, and bass trombone, which he insisted that the trombonist play the on appropriate instrument for the part.

²¹Hugh MacDonald, ed., *Berlioz's Orchestration Treatise* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 209.

²² *Ibid.*, 210.

Trevor Herbert states, “This labeling was derived from the tradition of trombones doubling vocal lines, and publishers frequently used alto, tenor, and bass clefs for the respective parts.”²³ In a letter from 1859 to his friend Theodor Avé Lallemand Brahms explains, in regards to instrumentation of the trombone section, “On no account three tenor trombones! One genuine little alto trombone and, if possible, also a genuine bass trombone.”²⁴

Nonetheless, the alto trombone was rarely used during this period because composers preferred the fuller sound of the tenor trombone. Composers such as Anton Bruckner (1824-1896) and Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904), continued scoring parts in the traditional style (alto, tenor, bass) but principal trombonists typically play the alto clef parts on tenor trombone. Like the alto trombone, the tenors were able to play in the high tessitura but could produce a fuller sound that the alto trombone could not achieve. Though the alto trombone became nearly obsolete in the Romantic period, the instrument later regained popularity.

Twentieth Century

The 20th century brought about a revival of the alto trombone, as composers and trombonists began taking an interest in the instrument once again. In an article featured in *The Instrumentalist*, Stephen C. Anderson states the factor that led to the revival of the instrument was the rediscovery of solo and chamber works of the Baroque era. Anderson states, trombonists were anxious to play these works but quickly discovered they could not play the pieces with a historically accurate sound using the modern tenor trombone.²⁵ As a result, playing and studying the alto trombone rose in popularity among composers, trombonists, and pedagogues. The 20th century composers who specified using the alto

²³ Trevor Herbert, *The Trombone* (London: Yale University Press, 2006), 165.

²⁴ William Kimball, “Alto Quotes,” Will Kimball, 2014, <http://kimballtrombone.com/alto-trombone/alto-quotes>.

²⁵ Stephen Anderson, “The Alto Trombone, Then and Now,” *The Instrumentalist*, vol. 40, (November 1985): 56.

trombone in their orchestral works include, Schoenberg's *Pellas und Melisande* (1902-3) and *Gurrelieder* (1900-1901), Britten's *The Burning Fiery Furnace* (1966), Berg's *Three Orchestral Pieces* (1914-15) and *Wozzeck* (1921), and Stravinsky's *Threni* (1958).

In the 1980s, pedagogues began writing modern alto trombone method books. Branimir Slokar's, *Schule für Altposaune*, *Méthode Complete de Trombone Alto*, and Stephen C. Anderson's, *A Complete Method for Alto Trombone*, are still frequently used by trombonists of today. Trombonist William Kimball explains, "Stephen C. Anderson, former president of the International Trombone Association, became one of the alto trombone's leading advocates, commissioning solos, writing method books, and publishing modern editions for the instrument. Since then, many new solos and transcriptions, recorded by prominent trombone soloists, have become available for the alto trombone".²⁶ Thus, 20th century scholarship created an opportunity to add to solo and chamber music repertoire of the alto trombone.

Alfred Hornoff
Suite for Four Trombones

Alfred Hornoff was born in Dresden in 1902 and is best known as a composer as well as former violinist of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. During his lifetime, he wrote *Beitrag zur Harmonielehre* (Contribution to Teaching Harmony) and worked on a music encyclopedia. His composition output consisted of *Sonate for Violin and Piano*, two string quartets, and *Suite for Four Trombones*, which was written in 1953 for his colleagues in the trombone section of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. His work for trombone quartet is relatively short with five movements, and characterized as Neo-Romantic. Hornoff composes expressive melodies throughout the piece that portray the beauty of the trombone quartet. He writes the piece with SATB voicing where the alto trombone carries many of the melodic lines in the highest register. The alto trombone is the featured voice throughout this work and delivers the expressive melodies that float above the three lower trombones. For example, the first movement is

²⁶ William Kimball, "Alto Trombone Solo Literature: An Annotated Bibliography" (DMA diss., Arizona State University, 2001), 8.

composed like a four part chorale, where the alto trombone carries the lyrical, expressive melody in the highest sounding register. Hornoff frequently includes contrasting dynamics and modern harmonies, which create drama and intensity throughout the piece. An example of frequent dynamic changes occur in measures 1 through 12 of movement two, *Moderato*; the beginning dynamic is *forte* and three measures later suddenly becomes *piano*. In this movement, the opening theme, marked *pesante*, begins as a unison figure found in the top three voices; by measure 7 the bass trombone is added, which creates a heroic character. After the opening unison theme, Hornoff changes the style to *leggiero* and the third trombone is featured for eight measures. Hornoff continues adding drama to this movement by changing the style to *cantabile* at rehearsal number six, then the alto trombone is given a short lyrical solo in the highest register at rehearsal number seven.

The third movement, *Allergo quasi Presto*, is a dance-like movement with a quick moving tempo. The alto trombone again is the lead voice in this movement while the three lower parts provide harmonic support. Like the second movement, the dynamics change frequently, which create musicality in the repeated themes. The movement is in ABA form with a *D.S al fine*.

The fourth movement, *Andante non troppo*, is a lyrical movement in E-flat minor. Like the prior movements, the alto trombone is the dominant voice that carries the expressive melody. Hornoff incorporates harmonic chromaticism at rehearsal number ten that create a colorful timbre among the four trombone parts. This five-measure section has a moving sixteenth note triplet figure presented in the third and bass trombone that contrasts the lyrical, legato melody in the alto trombone. Though this section briefly features the third and fourth trombone parts, the alto trombone is the dominant voice at rehearsal number eleven with a moving triplet melody, marked *expressivo*.

The fifth movement, *Allegro deciso con impeto*, is an exciting finale to *Suite for Four Trombones* that portrays a heroic character, similar to the second movement, but in the key of E-flat major. Hornoff begins the piece with a rhythmically unison triplet figure, marked *forte* to *fortissimo* in

all four parts; though the bass trombone only plays the figure in the second and fourth measures. This movement is the most challenging for the alto trombonist, as the range extends two octaves (e-flat to f²). Unlike the prior movements, all four parts are equally important because solo melodic lines are passed through each part.

Suite for Four Trombones presents some performance challenges, including balance issues. A tendency for a modern trombone quartet is to perform the work in a heavy style. In approaching this piece, a lighter style is more appropriate in capturing the neo-romantic elements. The bottom three trombone parts must not play above the alto trombone, as it carries the majority of the melodic lines. Having a listener detect balance issues will ensure a successful performance.

Malcolm Forsyth
Bachianas Capensis for Trombone Trio

Malcolm Forsyth was one of Canada's leading composers of the 20th and 21st centuries. Forsyth was born on December 8, 1936 in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. As a young student, he studied piano and flute before beginning trombone lessons with Hans Grin. He attended the South African College of Music where he earned a Bachelor of Music degree and the University of Cape Town where he earned his master's and doctoral degree. He majored in trombone, conducting, and composition. From 1961-1967 he played trombone in the Cape Town Symphony Orchestra. The event that led to establishing his career as a composer was in 1962, when the orchestra played his composition, *Overture Erewhon*. Two years later, Forsyth was invited to compose a work for the Cape Town Symphony Orchestra's 50th anniversary, which he entitled *Jubilee Overture*. In 1968, Malcolm Forsyth immigrated to Canada, where he settled in Edmonton, Alberta and became a member of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra. While as a member of the orchestra for eleven years, he played bass trombone for three years and principal trombone for eight years. Forsyth also became a faculty member at the University of Alberta where he taught theory, conducting, trombone, and composition until he retired in 2002. As a successful

composer in Canada, Forsyth received a JUNO award for *Atayoskewin* in 1987, *Sketches from Natal* in 1995, and *Electra rising: Concerto for Violincello and Orchestra* in 1998. He was also awarded Canadian Composer of the Year in 1989. In June 2011, the premieres of his last work, *A Ballad for Canada*, were performed by the National Arts Centre Orchestra and the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra. This piece was co-commissioned by both orchestras and received exhilarating reviews from audiences.²⁷

During Forsyth's career, he received commissions from well-known musicians, including Maureen Forrester, Judith Forst, Canadian Brass, Helmut Brass, and the Cape Town Symphony. His first successful commissioned piece in Canada was *Sketches of Natal* (1970), which was written for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. This work has been described as a vibrant piece that explores the tribal rhythms of his native country.²⁸ Forsyth's compositional style incorporates rhythmic patterns from his native African culture, as well as elements of popular music. Other successful works that incorporate his unique style include *Symphony No. 1* (1972), *Music for Mouths, Marimba, Mbira, and Roto-Toms* (1973), and *Atayoskewin* (1984).

Though Forsyth composed many successful pieces for orchestra, he was a composer of chamber music. He wrote several pieces for brass, woodwinds, as well as unconventional instruments, such as recorder and accordion. His chamber works for brass instruments, include brass ensemble, brass band, and brass quintet. Forsyth's concerti, *Sagittarius* (1975) and *Quinuefid* (1976), are two of his major works for brass quintet commissioned by the Canadian Brass Quintet. During his career, other chamber works Forsyth composed include woodwind ensembles and ensembles with mixed instrumentation.

²⁷ Carl Hare, "Malcolm Forsyth," August 14, 2011, <http://malcolmforsythcomposer.ca/>.

²⁸ Ibid.

Bachianas Capensis

In 1966, Malcolm Forsyth composed *Bachianas Capensis*, an early chamber work in a neo-baroque style for trombone trio or for any three instruments of suitable range.²⁹ It was inspired by Heitor Villa-Lobos's (1887-1959) *Bachianas Brasilieras*, a set of nine works for various instrumentation and voice. *Bachianas Brasilieras* incorporates the style of J.S. Bach into Villa-Lobos' native Brazilian folk songs and rhythms. Villa-Lobos described his work as "an homage to the great genius of Bach"³⁰, who he considered to be "a kind of universal folkloric source, rich and profound, and linking a source of all people."³¹ The title of this Forsyth's *Bachianas Capensis* pays homage to Bach combined with Forsyth's native homeland of Cape Town. In a letter to Dr. Donald Hummel in January 1975 Forsyth explains, "The title is a take-off on Villa-Lobo's *Bachianas Brasilieras*; *Capensis* is the Latin zoological suffix meaning "from the Cape of Good Hope"³² and is a period-piece in the style of Bach which "exploits the range of the trombone trio in vocal fugue form."³³ In the score, Forsyth explains this trombone trio can be played on any three substitute instruments of any suitable range and includes a B-flat Trumpet part, First Horn part, and Second Horn part with the score.

Imitating the style of Bach fugues, Forsyth includes an exposition in measures 1 through 18. The first statement of the subject is presented by the bass trombone in the first six measures. The tenor trombone enters with a tonal answer in measures 7 to 12 while the alto trombone proceeds with a real answer based on the subject in measures 13 to 18. Following the exposition, there is an episode that displays many of the traits of Bach fugues, such as modulating to closely-related minor and major keys.

²⁹ Malcolm Forsyth, *Bachianas Capensis*, (ON, Canada: Counterpoint Musical Services, 2004).

³⁰ Gerard Béhague, "Heitor Villa-Lobos," in Grove Music Online (Oxford University Press, 2007-2016), accessed July 8, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.www2.lib.ku.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/29373>.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Donald Austin Hummel, "A Selected and Annotated Bibliography of Original Works for Trombone Trio" (DMA diss, University of Kansas City, 1976), 59.

³³ Ibid., 59.

The piece starts in G minor and ends in G major. Throughout the development, Forsyth incorporates Bach-style voice leading with contrary motion in the three trombone parts, and sequences with continuous eighth note motion. A pedal point is introduced in the bass trombone part starting in measure 61 and is prominent in measure 67 as a whole note. In this pedal point section, the dominant (D Major) to tonic (G Major) motion is clearly heard in the bass trombone.

In this neo-baroque fugue, the alto trombone part functions as the highest voice, which range spans two octaves (d-d²). At measure 36, Forsyth writes in small font an option to play d² down an octave. The alto trombone part frequently remains in the highest range of the instrument with very little rest, which requires accurate embouchure efficiency and endurance. In addition, interval leaps of sevenths, octaves, and ninths contribute to the importance of efficiency. It should be mentioned there is an error in the tenor trombone part in measure 30. The written D-natural should be a C-natural in order to sound correctly with the C-natural in the alto trombone and the A-natural in the bass trombone.

Virgil Thomson
Family Portrait

Virgil Thomson was born in Kansas City, Missouri on November 25, 1896. At the age of five Thomson received his first piano lessons given by his older cousin, Lela Garrett. In 1909, he met his earliest mentor, Robert Leigh Murray, a local piano salesman and tenor vocalist at the Thomson family church. Murray exposed Thomson to local musical performances by taking him to orchestra and chamber music concerts, and introduced him to some of the local Kansas City pianists and organists. Thomson gained his first experience in music as an assistant to Kansas City organist, Clarence Sears at Grace Episcopal Church. After graduating high school, Thomson attended Kansas City Polytechnic Institute and enlisted in the army for sixteen months before the war ended in 1918. In 1919, he attended Harvard University, where he met some of his most influential teachers; Edward Burlingame Hill, a

French-trained composer, taught orchestration and introduced him to modern music; A.T Davison, also a French-trained scholar of early music, directed the Harvard Glee Club, where Thomson assisted him and accompanied the ensemble, which exposed Thomson to music of the Baroque and Renaissance; and S. Foster Damon, an instructor of freshman English, composer, and music scholar, introduced Thomson to the music of Erik Satie, which later influenced Thomson's style of composing.³⁴ In 1920-22, Thomson began studying counterpoint, composition, and organ with Nadia Boulanger in Paris. At this time, Thomson became acquainted with Erik Satie and the composers of Les Six, who influenced his composition style.

Another notable influence on Virgil Thomson's music career was American poet and novelist, Gertrude Stein. Thomson met Stein in January 1926, when he and a friend visited her home. Stein befriended Thomson because she found him to be an intellectual who spoke intelligently of her work. When Thomson visited Stein in 1927, he approached her with music he composed for voice and piano with the text being Stein's poem, "Susie Asado". Thomson once stated that his theory was if the "text is set correctly to music, the sound of the music and meaning of the text would get across to the listener; thus, the poem would be like a portrait of Susie Asado".³⁵ Other collaborations between Stein and Thomson include two well-known American operas, *Four Saints in Three Acts* (1928) and *The Mother of Us All* (1946). Both operas received great reviews but their second work, *The Mother of Us All* is Thomson's most performed work. Collaboration with Gertrude Stein continued until her death in 1946.

To add to the diversity of Thomson's talents, he is the author of *The State of Music* (1939), *The Music Scene* (1945), and *The Art of Judging Music* (1948). He was an occasional guest conductor for some of the top orchestras in the United States, where he premiered his new works. In addition, he was a

³⁴ Anthony Tommasini and Ruland Jackson, "Virgil Thomson," Grove Music Online (Oxford University Press, 2007-2016), accessed July 9, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.www2.lib.ku.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/A2225674>.

³⁵ Ibid.

music columnist, writing reviews for the *Boston Evening Transcript* (1921-22) and was the head chief music critic at the *Herald Tribune* (1925-1940).

Thomson's music has been described by critic Anthony Tommarsini as "simple, direct, clear, and radical".³⁶ Tommarsini describes Thomson's method of composing as a "discipline of spontaneity that led to his unusual experiments of writing portraits of people."³⁷ After setting Stein's poem, "Susie Asado" as the text for his new piano and voice composition, Thomson began composing a style of character piece called, *portraits*, which were first inspired by the characters in Stein's works. After presenting the work to Stein, he drew inspiration from real-life individuals whose portraits were painted by artists. During his career, Thomson composed 150 *portraits* for various instruments, both solo and chamber settings, and 109 composed for solo piano. He describes his *portraits* as musical portraits drawn from life, like a sitter posing for an artist's painting.³⁸ Thomson was not the first composer to develop this type of character piece, but his compositional style created abstract works that attempted to bring out "the inner nature of the portrait subject."³⁹ Thus, his musical *portraits* pay homage to the subjects portrayed in his works.

Family Portrait

A Fanfare: Robin Smith
At Fourteen: Annie Bernard
Digging: a portrait of Howard Rea
A Scherzo: Priscilla Rea
Man of Iron: Willy Eisenhart

In August 1972, Virgil Thomson composed *Family Portrait*, an original sketch for solo piano. The American Brass Quintet commissioned Thomson to write a piece for the group in 1974. Thomson

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ P. Gtanville-Hicks, "Virgil Thomson," *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 35, no. 2 (April 1949), 210.

³⁹ Anthony Tommasini, *Virgil Thomson's Musical Portraits*, (Pendragon Press: NY, 1986), 2.

arranged the work, which he composed two years prior for the brass quintet. Thomson knew of their reputation as a professional virtuoso brass quintet and sought to challenge the group in composing a difficult work. Thomson stated, “I also included certain rare instruments which they happen to own – alto trombone, for instance, and two piccolo trumpets in high B-flat.”⁴⁰ After collaborating with Thomson, the American Brass Quintet premiered *Family Portrait* on March 24, 1975 at Carnegie Recital Hall in New York City.

Family Portrait consists of five musical portraits, each depicting the mood, emotion, and character based on real-life individuals found in a photograph. Virgil Thomson includes composer notes in the score and writes “*Family Portrait* consists of five portraits, four of these being of members from the same family, the fifth a stranger to the family, perhaps a visitor.”⁴¹ In a dissertation by Randall Sorensen, Thomson describes the individuals whose portraits are depicted in this piece as, Priscilla Rea, the subject of the fourth movement, was the daughter of a childhood friend of Thomson’s in Kansas City. Her daughters Robin Smith (her daughter with Rea’s first husband) and Annie Bernard (daughter of her second marriage) are depicted in the first and second movements. The third movement, Howard Rea, describes Priscilla’s third husband, while the fifth movement is an homage to a stranger or visitor to the family.⁴² Each movement has a similar timbre and tonality to show the family’s relationship, while the tonality of the fifth movement differs as it describes the visitor who is not related to the others.

In brass quintet repertoire, *Family Portrait* is unusual work due its instrumentation. In this work, the trumpets and trombones switch to secondary instruments in one or more movements. The trumpets play trumpets in C, D, and piccolo trumpet, while tenor trombone switches to alto trombone and the bass trombone switches to tenor trombone. Randall J. Sorensen concludes the reason *Family Portrait* is not

⁴⁰ Ibid., 166.

⁴¹ Virgil Thomson, “Family Portrait,” (New York: London, G. Schirmer, 1977).

⁴² Randall Sorensen, “Original Repertoire for the American Brass Quintet, 1962-1987: A guide for Performers and Composers” (DMA diss, Ball State University, 1998), 75, ProQuest 9825886.

programmed often is because it uses several different instruments and is especially difficult for the trumpets.⁴³ Due to the unusual instrumentation of this piece, it is a rarely performed work in brass quintet repertoire, but brass performers should be knowledgeable of its existence.

In the fourth movement, *A Scherzo: Priscilla Rea*, the trumpets switch to trumpets in D and the first trumpet switches to piccolo trumpet in measure 19; the first trombone switches to the alto trombone and the bass trombone switches to tenor trombone. Though Thomson intended this movement to be played on alto trombone, one could consider performing it on a small bore tenor. The second option would not be advised, though, because Thomson specified alto trombone in the part and endurance would be a greater issue on tenor. In measures 1 to 7, the alto trombone delivers a lyrical “Priscilla Rea” theme that is marked *sostenuto, molto espressivo* accompanied by cup muted first trumpet. The beginning of this movement creates a mysterious atmosphere that depicts the character of Priscilla Rea. Following the opening theme in the first seven measures, Thomson creates a series of variations on the theme of “Priscilla Rea”.

In this movement, the alto and tenor trombones function as accompaniment, playing rhythmic unison motives throughout the piece. Though the alto trombone is a soloist at the beginning, it provides harmonic support to the moving lines, along with the tenor trombone, throughout the remaining movement. The range of the alto trombone expands two octaves (e to e²) while the range of the tenor trombone reaches an octave and a half (c-sharp to g-sharp¹). The difficulty of the alto trombone part is range, endurance, and hearing the dissonant intervals of the accompaniment. In addition, the alto trombonist and other members of the brass quintet will discover switching instruments to be exhausting on the embouchure.

Another difficulty for the alto trombonist is accurately hearing the dissonant intervals. Thomson incorporates many accidentals throughout all the parts. As a result, accurately performing all accidentals

⁴³ Ibid.

and hearing the dissonant intervals create a challenge. For example, the alto trombone part in measures 24 to 27 and measures 42 to 60 are difficult because the part creates a pointillistic effect with the tenor trombone. An additional challenge for the alto trombone is playing *piano* while in the middle to high tessitura of the instrument. For example, the “Priscilla Rea” theme stated in measures 1 to 7 must sound effortless and float above the muted trumpet without overpowering it.

Donald Appert
Pavane of Praise

Dr. Donald Appert is an accomplished composer, conductor, and trombonist. He earned a Bachelor and Master of Music degree in Trombone at the New England Conservatory. In the 1980s, he earned his Doctorate of Musical Arts degree in Orchestral Conducting at the University of Kansas. Throughout his career, Dr. Appert has received many prestigious awards and recognitions for his conducting career, including the 2014 Clark County Arts Commission Lifetime Achievement in the Arts Award and earning awards and honorable mentions for the American Prize in Orchestral Programming, most recently in 2015. Currently, Dr. Appert is the conductor of the Oregon Sinfonietta and the Jewish Community Orchestra, both based in the Portland area. He has served for 26 years as the chair of the music department, professor of music, and musical director/conductor of the Clark College Orchestra. His orchestral conducting instructors include Ricardo Muti, Otto Werner Mueller, Maurice Abravanel, Daniel Lewis, Fredrick Fennell, George Lawner, and Richard Pittman.

As a composer, Dr. Appert has been commissioned to write works for many ensembles. His latest, *Concerto for Viola and Orchestra* (2016) was premiered on March 13, 2016 by the Oregon Sinfonietta and viola soloist, Brett Deubner. Appert’s commissioned works have been premiered throughout the world: *Quartetto Basso* for Rocco Parisi’s bass clarinet quartet in June 2013, *Nara Variations* for the Ashiya Chamber Orchestra in Kobe, Japan in December 2007, and *Elegy* and *Thru a Glass Darkly* for the same ensemble in November 2001 and 1999. Since 2005, Dr. Appert has been an

American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP) Plus Award winner for performances of his music in many countries.

In his career as a trombonist, Dr. Appert has studied with well-known teachers such as Ron Barron, John Coffey, Tyrone Breuninger, and Stephen C. Anderson. He performed in ensembles such as the Kansas City Philharmonic, Virginia Symphony, Virginia Opera Orchestra, and the Springfield Massachusetts Symphony. While attending the University of Kansas, he played trombone professionally as second trombonist in the Kansas City Philharmonic. A contributing influence on Appert and his alto trombone compositions in the 1980s was Stephen C. Anderson, former trombone professor at KU. Appert's first interest in the alto trombone started when he studied at the New England Conservatory with Ron Barron, former Principal Trombonist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. On his masters recital, Appert included Johann Georg Albrechtsberger's (1736-1809) *Concerto in B-flat* and also performed it as a soloist for his first orchestra job with the Virginia Philharmonic, now known as the Virginia Symphony, for a summer concert series entitled "Go for Baroque". He frequently used the alto trombone on orchestral works with choir, such as works composed by Brahms and Mozart, as well as the Virginia Opera Orchestra's production of Mozart's *Magic Flute*. Appert states, "It was easier to balance the high parts originally composed for alto trombone."⁴⁴

During the 1980s, a revival in the alto trombone generated an interest by trombonists, pedagogues, and composers. Published in 1984, *A Complete Method for E-flat Alto Trombone* by Stephen C. Anderson created a new method of treating the alto trombone as a transposing instrument. In an interview Dr. Appert states, "When I moved out to Lawrence to do my DMA, I studied alto trombone with Steve Anderson and helped him proofread his new alto trombone method/etude book. He had an interesting approach of having it as a transposition of the tenor trombone positions instead of reading

⁴⁴ Donald Appert, interview by Jennifer Shinska, Lawrence, KS, August 3, 2016.

alto clef, so I did the alto clef versions for him.”⁴⁵ In this same year, Anderson asked Appert to compose a work for alto trombone and piano, which he titled *Maskil* (1984), and was performed by Anderson at the International Trombone Association Midwestern Trombone Workshop. In addition, Appert also premiered his work for trombone choir entitled, *Threnody*.

Pavane of Praise

Two years after completing his DMA in orchestral conducting, Appert composed *Pavane of Praise* (1987) for alto trombone, two flutes, violin, and piano. The piece is dedicated to his brother, Tom, a public school teacher and horn player, as well as the People of Hope, a Catholic Charismatic Covenant Community located in New Jersey. After teaching orchestra in the public schools of New Jersey for ten years, his brother became an administrator for the People of Hope for six years and taught at the Koinonia Academy as a choir, math, and study skills teacher. Appert recalls his brother, “...asking me for a composition for the instruments involved in a praise band for the community which was two flutes, violin, horn, and piano. Of the players, I only knew of Tom’s skill level, so I tried to write it with amateur players in mind and my own piano skills (from about ten years of lessons).”⁴⁶ Since the piece is short, its original intent was to be performed during the offertory in church services. Though this work originally included horn, Appert states the alto trombone may be substituted.

Pavane of Praise is based on the *pavane*, a stately Renaissance dance with three repeated sections that follow the form AABBC. The *pavane* was often paired with the lively *galliard*; these were popular courtly dances in Spain, Italy, France, Germany, and England. In addition, Dr. Appert states he was inspired by and references one of his favorite works by Maurice Ravel’s (1875-1937), *Pavane for the Dead Princess*. The introduction of *Pavane of Praise* is in 2/4 with a dance-like tempo of quarter note = 144, which begins with flutes, violin, and piano. At rehearsal letter A, the time signature

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

changes to 3/4 and the melody is presented in alto trombone and violin parts, accompanied by piano. The flutes enter in the fifth measure after A with a reoccurring staccato motive that adds rhythmic drive to the legato melody. This motive is passed to the violin two measures later, then to alto trombone at rehearsal letter E. The B section of the melody is introduced seven measures after rehearsal letter A, with ascending dotted half note intervals of ascending fifths and thirds. Starting in the seventh measure before rehearsal letter F, Appert incorporates an arrangement of one of his favorite hymns, “Be Thou My Vision”, which appears in the alto trombone part as a hemiola. At rehearsal letter F, the tune is arranged with the alto trombone and violin performing the melody, while the piano provides chordal accompaniment. In this section, the flutes deliver harmonic support until the coda at rehearsal letter G.

Each instrument provides an equally important role as the melody and accompaniment passes through each instrument. In particular, the alto trombone provides the melody for most of the work. The most important melodic role of the alto trombone is performing the tune, “Be Thou My Vision” that appears seven measures before rehearsal letter F and continues until the coda at rehearsal letter G. Challenging aspects of this piece include balance issues due to the unusual instrumentation. Appert advises the alto trombonist, “As the only brass player you will need to be especially careful not to overshadow the other instruments. Flutes and violin are not as easily heard as an alto trombone will be.”⁴⁷ During rehearsals, Appert suggests having a listener detect any balance issues as the alto trombone part was originally written for horn, and the tessitura of the alto trombone stays in the upper register throughout the work. Dr. Appert suggests that the alto trombonist play lightly and “think a bit like the trumpet in Bach’s *Brandenburg Concerto No. 2*. I recall hearing the great principal trumpet of the Chicago Symphony play it on tour in Boston having to balance with recorders!”⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

Another challenge of presented in performing this piece is reading the alto trombone part, which is written in tenor clef. This writer suggests the performer rewrite the part in alto clef because it ensures the performer of reading the part correctly without transposing. As Appert is a trombonist, he explains why he wrote the part in tenor clef, “I suspect the likelihood is that more trombonists read tenor than alto. Perhaps someone might chance it on a tenor trombone if they had the high chops for it?”⁴⁹ Today, professional trombonists are required to read alto clef and it would make sense to rewrite the part.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the alto trombone has been integrated in chamber music since the Renaissance. By the Baroque period, it was considered a sacred instrument used in churches to double the voices in the choir. During this time, Austrian composers used the alto trombone as an *obligato* instrument in their sacred works with voice. The trend of using the *obligato* alto trombone progressed into the Classical period, but gradually became an obsolete tradition. Though the alto trombone was still used in the orchestral works of the late Classical and early Romantic period, it was not generally considered a chamber music instrument in the Romantic (except for Beethoven's *Drei Equali*). When Baroque solos and chamber music works were rediscovered in the 20th century, it reinvigorated the alto trombone because trombonists wanted an authentic performance. The alto trombone's popularity among composers and trombonists resulted in expanding its repertoire, and creating performance opportunities. The selected works in this document demonstrate how the alto trombone began as a sacred *obligato* instrument in the Baroque, which evolved into a less technical role in the chamber works of the Classical period. By the Romantic period, the alto trombone was rarely used, but the revival in the 20th century developed the alto trombone into an essential part of chamber ensemble music.

As a result, this document is an additional resource for performers and pedagogues that presents a brief overview of alto trombone chamber music repertoire from each period in music history. Since there is a dearth of research papers on the topic of chamber music using alto trombone, this document enriches the limited sources available. It is a guide for trombonists who wish to perform these works, as well as a resource for pedagogues in educating their students on lesser-known chamber music works that feature the alto trombone. This document lays the foundation for others to contribute to researching and rediscovering unknown alto trombone chamber works that will increase its repertoire. Trombonists should commission more chamber works that feature the alto trombone in ensembles with

traditional and non-traditional instrumentation. Thus, doing so will increase its repertoire and promote the alto trombone as a standard chamber music instrument of today.

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