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Discovering Two New Solo Works for Trombone: A History, Summary, and Preparation of Frank Gulino's Sonata No. 1: The Journey, and Joseph Buono's Elegy for Trombone and Piano

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DISCOVERING TWO NEW SOLO WORKS FOR TROMBONE: A HISTORY,
SUMMARY, AND PREPARATION OF FRANK GULINO'S SONATA NO. 1: THE
JOURNEY, AND JOSEPH BUONO'S ELEGY FOR TROMBONE AND PIANO

by

John Mark Whitfield, Jr.

A Doctoral Project
Submitted to the Graduate School,
the College of Arts and Sciences
and the School of Music
at The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

Approved by:

Ben McIlwain, Committee Chair
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ABSTRACT

This paper will serve as a guide to musicians for the preparation and performance of two recent solo compositions for trombone worthy of study and performance: Frank Gulino's *Sonata No. 1: The Journey* (2019) and Joseph Buono's *Elegy for Trombone and Piano* (2016). Included will be sections or chapters on the history and background of each work, biographical information about each composer, a detailed performer's analysis of each work, exclusive interviews with the composers, and interviews with the trombonists who commissioned and/or premiered each work.

Each individual interview will provide insight into the music, including information on personal inspirations and compositional processes, a focus on emotional content, thematic elements, and recommendations on preparing each piece. Recital programming suggestions have also been included.

The pieces examined warrant serious study and performance, and this paper will inform future preparations of these two works.

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this document to my grandmother, Jean Hawkins, for being a constant source of positivity and encouragement throughout the process of finishing my doctorate. She has been a tremendous model of perseverance amid her own battle with cancer, and has served as my inspiration to finish strong.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|------------|--|
| <i>ATW</i> | American Trombone Workshop |
| <i>ETW</i> | Eastern Trombone Workshop |
| <i>STS</i> | Southeast Trombone Symposium |
| <i>USM</i> | The University of Southern Mississippi |

INTRODUCTION

The collective repertoire of trombone literature is expanding rapidly - it seems that new composers and new pieces are surfacing on an almost weekly basis. Thanks to the combination of burgeoning pedagogical interest, composition consortia, and surging appreciation for new works, increasingly more composers are emerging and writing for the trombone in earnest, leading to a considerable expansion of available repertoire. Occasionally, a new piece reveals itself to possess a longevity rivaling the older, more established repertoire. Frank Gulino's *Sonata No. 1: The Journey* and Joseph Buono's *Elegy for Trombone and Piano* are two such pieces, warranting serious study and performance.

Statement of Purpose

This study examines Frank Gulino's *Sonata No. 1: The Journey* and Joseph Buono's *Elegy for Trombone and Piano* from a performer's perspective to better understand the stylistic characteristics and musical challenges encountered in each piece. This study also provides crucial historical context and biographical information on each composer that will serve to inform future performances of the selected works.

State of Research

Scholarly material concerning these pieces is negligible. Buono's *Elegy* was published in 2016 and Gulino's *Sonata* in 2019. Dr. David Perkel's 2013 doctoral document, "Musical Development in Four Solo Trombone and Euphonium Works by a Rising Young Composer, Frank Gulino," discusses Gulino's musical development and stylistic attributes. Dr. Perkel further addresses Gulino's continued maturation and popularity in an April 2017 article for the International Trombone Association Journal.

Neither of Dr. Perkel's publications specifically address analytical or contextual details of Gulino's *Sonata*. At the time of this writing, there have been no publications, scholarly or otherwise, written about Joseph Buono or his *Elegy for Trombone*.

Methodology

The most significant resources utilized for this study are interviews with the composers of the selected pieces, as well as the prominent professional musicians and educators who commissioned and/or premiered each work. Interviews were conducted via telephone, Zoom, and Facetime, and were recorded with the application TapeACall (for phone interviews), and Zoom (for the Zoom and Facetime interviews). Also contributing to the source pool is my own interpretation and analysis of Buono and Gulino's music based on academic study and practice of the two selected pieces.

The dissertations consulted for this project provided valuable examples of categorical application, serving as case models for research methodology and pedagogical documentation practices. Several dissertations are closely related to this study; these detail the styles and contributions of various composers through compositional and theoretical analyses of their works, as well as pertinent biographical information. Graphic representations of Mr. Buono's original notes were recreated in Adobe Illustrator and NoteFlight. The originals are included in Appendix G.

CHAPTER I - FRANK GULINO

Biography

Frank Gulino (b. 1987) is a composer, bass trombonist, and entertainment lawyer currently based in the Washington, D.C. area.¹ Originally from New York City, he holds a Bachelor of Music degree in Bass Trombone Performance from the Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University, where he studied with Randy Campora.² At the age of thirty-three, he has written and published over fifty works for different ensembles.³ Gulino has also had his works commercially recorded a number of times, appearing on *Ubiquity*, a solo bass trombone album by St. Louis Symphony bass trombonist Gerry Pagano; *Dream Times* by euphonium virtuoso Steven Mead; and *Eastern Standard*, an eponymous album released by a Pennsylvania-based trio of horn, tuba, and piano.⁴

Gulino's works have been performed domestically and internationally at events such as the International Trombone Festival, the American Trombone Workshop, and the Alessi Seminar.⁵ Gulino's compositions have also served as the required repertoire for several major international brass competitions: the International Trombone Association's George Roberts Bass Trombone Competition, the International Tuba Euphonium Conference's Solo Tuba Competition, the International Women's Brass Conference's

1. David Perkel, "Musical Development in Four Solo Trombone and Euphonium Works by a Rising Young Composer, Frank Gulino" (DMA diss., Catholic University of America, 2013), 2.

2. "About," Frank Gulino, accessed July 10, 2020, <https://frankgulino.com/index.html>.

3. "Works," Frank Gulino, accessed July 10, 2020, <https://frankgulino.com/works.html>.

4. David Perkel, "Musical Development in Four Solo Trombone and Euphonium Works by Composer Frank Gulino," *International Trombone Association Journal* 45, no. 1 (April 2017): 20-23.

5. Ibid.

Susan Slaughter Solo Competition, the Taiwan Tuba-Euphonium Competition, the Busan Music Competition, and the Leonard Falcone International Euphonium and Tuba Competition, among others.⁶

Gulino began experimenting with composition in middle school. He started by writing short, four-measure phrases. There was little cohesion from one phrase to the next, and each occasion was random and self-contained.⁷ He downloaded an early version of the Finale Notepad music notation software, and would write for hours at a time.⁸ He never took a composition lesson or had any artistic ambitions, but he enjoyed experimenting with different sound combinations and having Finale play them back.⁹

Many styles of music have influenced Gulino's compositions. His two major influences are band and film music,¹⁰ and film composers John Williams, Jerry Goldsmith, and James Horner are among his favorite creators.¹¹ Eric Ewazen stands out as a favorite composer for solo trombone literature, significantly influencing Gulino's thoughts on accessibility.¹² In discussing his own compositional style, Gulino takes pride in the comparison to one of his top musical influences.¹³

6. "About," Frank Gulino.

7. Perkel, "Musical Development," 3.

8. Frank Gulino, Zoom interview by author, digital recording, New Bern NC, 13 July 2020.

9. Ibid.

10. Perkel, "Musical Development," 12.

11. Frank Gulino, interview.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

SONATA NO. 1: THE JOURNEY

Historical Background

Frank Gulino finished composing his first sonata, *The Journey*, in early 2019,¹⁴ though a full-length sonata was not his original objective. Initially, Gulino intended to write a slow, melodic, single-movement recital piece. While nearing the completion of that movement, he was inspired to segue into a more substantial, multi-movement piece.¹⁵ Upon finishing the more technical movement, Gulino decided that these were the second and third movements to a first movement that he had not yet written. He felt that these two movements were some of his best writing to date, and subsequently pushed himself to write a first movement that satisfactorily completed the piece.¹⁶ The three-movement *Sonata No. 1: The Journey* was the result.

Dr. David Perkel, professor of trombone and euphonium at Towson University, wrote his dissertation on Frank Gulino. When coordinating the Towson Eastern Trombone Workshop, Dr. Perkel invited Matt Vaughn, co-principal trombonist of the Philadelphia Orchestra and Perkel's former U.S. Air Force Band colleague, to premiere a new work by Gulino. Vaughn agreed, and premiered *Sonata No. 1: The Journey* in September 2019.

14. Frank Gulino, *Sonata No. 1: "The Journey"* (New Haven: Cimarron Music, 2019), 2.

15. Frank Gulino, interview.

16. Ibid.

Performance Considerations

Frank Gulino's *Sonata No. 1: The Journey* comprises three six-minute movements. The piano part presents a consistent anchor for the trombonist, both harmonically and rhythmically. The majority of the piece lies in the trombone's middle register, although the trombonist should be prepared for a Bb1 in the first movement, and a Db5 in the second. The first two movements contain extended cadenzas, both accompanied and unaccompanied. There are fifteen written key changes throughout the piece, representing nine distinct key signatures.

The knowledge that Gulino wrote the second and third movements before he wrote the first will inform the performer's examination of the work. To assist in the discussion of thematic materials, this document will examine the movements in chronological order of composition, beginning with the second movement. This will provide a more logical examination of the thematic development, and highlight Gulino's intent during his compositional process.

Movement Two

The second movement can be divided into three sections: Quasi-cadenza, Theme A (and A'), and Theme B. It mapped as follows:

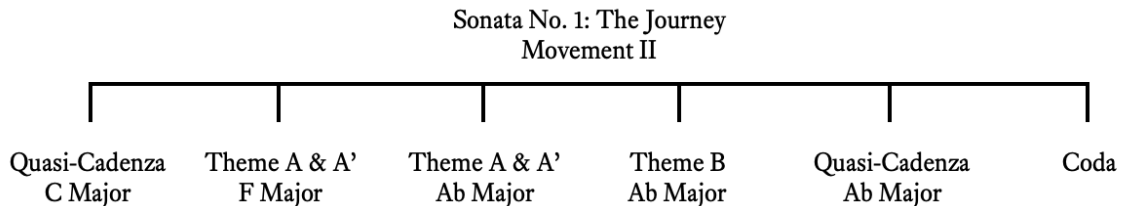


Figure 1. Thematic map of Gulino Sonata, Mvt. 2

The trombonist begins by playing the introduction, entering on a C3. Much of the melodic content of the second movement is based on the first two measures of the trombone

part: the descending half step, ascending half step, and ascending perfect fifth (see Musical Example 1):

Musical Example 1 *Gulino Sonata No. 1, Movement 2, mm. 1-9*

The pianist plays a short transition, and the trombone part returns with the melody from mm. 6-7 transposed up a minor sixth. This phrase appears four times in the second movement: once in C Major, and three times in Ab Major. This is the only time the motive appears in this octave, however. These two measures (thirteen and fourteen) present a technical challenge, as the player is required to stretch into the high register of the trombone. The trombonist should auralize these two measures, transition that to singing, and subsequently play on the mouthpiece. Both the singing and mouthpiece buzzing should be done with a pitch reference, preferably a piano.

Gulino uses a V-I motion to modulate to F major at m. 18 (see Musical Example 2). The trombonist plays Theme A, a long melody based on the opening motive.



Musical Example 2 *Gulino Sonata No. 1, Movement 2, mm. 18-24*

The melody grows more florid through the A' section, then Gulino shifts the key up a minor third to the key of Ab major (the relative major to F minor) at m. 32. The accompaniment becomes slightly denser, but the overall melodic and harmonic content are identical to m. 18, in both the trombone and piano parts. The movement climaxes at the end of this section on a Bb4 in the trombone part.

The following section, Theme B, is comprised of a nine-measure Ab Major melody that is also based on the opening motive. The trombonist plays this melody twice, the antecedent phrase at mezzo piano ending on an Eb3 (V), and the consequent phrase at forte ending on an Ab4 (I).

The movement ends a major third down from where it began, but the harmonic and melodic content are nearly identical. The trombone part is copied, verbatim, in Ab (where the beginning was in C). Mm. 75-76 return in the same key as mm. 7-8. These two measures presented a modulation from C Major to Ab Major at the beginning, but reinforce the key of Ab Major at the end of the movement. The trombonist repeats the initial development motive a fourth time, moving into a short coda that resolves on an Ab3.

Gulino's original intent was for this movement to be a single-movement work for solo trombone. While nearing its completion, he was inspired to write a follow-up movement, forming what would become the second and third movements of the sonata.

Movement Three

The form of third movement is rounded binary, and can be divided into four sections: the A section is comprised of the Introduction and Theme 1, and the B section includes the Interlude and Theme 2. The movement begins with an energetic introduction in F minor, presenting Gulino's most technically challenging trombone writing to date. The pianist plays three accented fortissimo quarter notes, and the trombonist enters at a mezzo forte on ascending major ninth leaps from F2 to G3 with alternating accents (on the first F and the second G). The second measure repeats this and adds an accented Eb2, a descending leap of a major tenth. These two measures occur twice at the beginning of the movement and present a technical challenge for the trombonist.

The musical notation is presented on two staves. The first staff contains measures 1 through 5, and the second staff contains measures 6 through 8. The key signature is F minor (three flats), and the time signature is common time (C). The tempo is marked 'Allegro' with a quarter note equal to approximately 144 beats per minute. The dynamic marking is mezzo-forte (mf). The notation includes various articulations such as accents and slurs, and features complex intervals like major ninth leaps and major tenth leaps.

Musical Example 3 *Gulino Sonata No. 1, Movement 3, mm. 1-8*

It is recommended that the trombonist approach these measures slowly, and consider alternate positions, both with and without the valve, in selecting the combination that best works for them. The movement then transitions into its main thematic material.

The first theme occurs in Bb Major at m. 13 (see Musical Example 4). The primary thematic material of this movement is more technically demanding than anything else seen in the entire piece. It requires a clear, fast double-tongue and the aural acuity to execute multiple ascending fourths.



Musical Example 4 *Gulino Sonata No. 1, Movement 3, mm. 13-16*

This theme repeats again at m. 21, this time down a minor third in G Major (see Musical Example 5). Here, Gulino begins to elaborate on the end of the phrase, and the material that follows. The trombonist must possess excellent, accurate slide technique throughout all of the following technical passages. The quick tempo and micro-adjustments needed between slide positions in the upper register make this section particularly troublesome with regard to intonation.



Musical Example 5 *Gulino Sonata No. 1, Movement 3, mm. 21-33*

Gulino then uses the same thematic material to transition into a slower, melodic interlude in A minor, beginning the B section. The interlude, marked *Moderato* at m. 43, is a drastic change in character from the previous material. The melodies in the trombone part move largely by step, a stark contrast to the larger leaps in the previous sections. The accompaniment becomes more blocked and chordal, in contrast to prior rhythmic complexities.

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 43 to 49, and the second system covers measures 50 to 56. Both systems are marked *Moderato* with a tempo of $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 56$. The piano part (right and left hands) features a sparse, chordal accompaniment with a mix of half and quarter notes. The trombone part (top staff) has a melodic line characterized by stepwise motion, with some triplets and dynamic markings such as *pp*, *mp*, *p*, and *mf*. The key signature is one flat (A minor).

Musical Example 6 *Gulino Sonata No. 1, Movement 3, mm. 43-56*

The sparse rhythm in the piano part allows the trombonist to approach this section with a subtle sense of rubato, allowing for a freedom of expression that has not yet been achievable in the movement.

The movement next modulates from A Minor to D minor at m. 55, with the trombone part growing more rhythmically and melodically complex (see Musical Example 7):

The image displays musical notation for Musical Example 7. At the top, there are two staves. The upper staff is a single line in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It features a melodic line starting with a half note, followed by a quarter note, and then a triplet of eighth notes. A dynamic marking of *mf* is placed below the first measure. The lower staff consists of two staves in bass clef, representing the piano accompaniment. It shows chords and single notes with a dynamic marking of *mp*. Below this, a larger musical score begins at measure 57. The top staff is a single line in bass clef, showing a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes and a dynamic marking of *p*. The bottom part of the score is a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef, showing piano accompaniment with chords and single notes.

Musical Example 7 *Gulino Sonata No. 1, Movement 3, mm. 55-62*

The trombonist plays two ascending melodic figures, the second beginning at piano on a D2, then ends the section with a quasi-cadenza based on the melodic material from the beginning of this section (m. 47).

The second theme enters, marked *Expressively*, modulating from D Minor to D Major, and the trombonist begins with an ascending sixth, A2 to F#3. The third phrase of the section modulates to Bb Major, ending on an Eb chord. Gulino will use this section again in the first movement. The pianist plays a short, soft interlude before the *Maestoso*

at m. 113. The rhythm in the piano part here is fanfare-like, and incorporates melodic content from mm. 51-53 in the transition.

The A' section begins with the return of the opening thematic material at m. 119. The trombonist repeats the ascending ninths and descending tenths from the beginning of the movement. The melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic content here is identical to the beginning, and leads to the recapitulation of the first theme, again in Bb Major. The recurrence of the first theme is identical to that of the beginning of the piece. Where the A in the trombone part in m. 20 serves to transition down to the G, the A in m. 138 acts as a leading tone back to the Bb in m. 139. Where the first theme occurs in G Major in m. 21, here it returns in Bb Major. This thematic material is identical to the earlier occurrence (excepting the change in key) until m. 142. 142 to the end represents a short coda, the final phrase beginning on an Eb2 and ending on a fortissimo Bb4.

The challenges of this movement are two-fold. The performer must possess the technical proficiency to execute the multiple-tonguing and fast slide movements required throughout the movement. The movement also demands a degree of endurance, as the performer will have been playing in the mid to high register for over eighteen minutes by the end of the piece.

Movement One

The first movement can be divided into four sections: Exposition/Introduction, Theme 1, Cadenza, Theme 2 (from movement 3). The introduction/exposition begins with material based on the third movement. The opening motive, performed by the pianist at m. 1 and the trombonist at m. 14, is a thematic transformation and elaboration on the melody first presented in m. 51 of movement three (see Musical Examples 8 and 9 for comparison).



Musical Example 8 *Gulino Sonata No. 1, Movement 3, mm. 50-53*

Musical Example 9 *Gulino Sonata No. 1, Movement 1, mm. 13-18*

The opening follows the same motion as the material in Musical Example 9, in the same key but in a more declamatory, fanfare-like style. The intervallic motion is largely stepwise in the melodies that follow, but the trombonist should note the accented ascending fourths found in m. 22 (see Musical Example 10).

Musical Example 10 *Gulino Sonata No. 1, Movement 1, mm. 19-22*

The accompaniment settles into D minor in m. 27, and the first theme occurs at m. 33. This presents the first considerable range extension of the piece: a leap of a fifth from an F4 to C5, resolving down by step to a B4. The key changes at m. 41 and the trombonist

plays the same material from m. 33, raised by a half-step to Eb minor. The key changes again to Eb major in m. 45. The short interlude that follows returns to the opening thematic material, and the key signature returns to the initial one flat.

The trombonist then plays an extended, unaccompanied cadenza. The key signature matches that of the beginning of the piece, but the trombone melody is lowered by a whole step. The opening melody is largely pentatonic, so the key of the first phrase is ambiguous. The trombonist's next two phrases, however, briefly imply D minor before disguising the key again in mm. 71-72. The second half of this cadenza is largely comprised of material derived from the opening 1-7-1-5 motive of the second movement (see Musical Example 11).

59 *cadenza, freely*
f

65 *pp* *mf*

72 *f* *mf* *p*

78 *accel.*
mf *p* *f*

83 *p* *mf* *rit.* *mp*
 Expressively, but in time ♩ = 72

89 *pp*

Musical Example 11 *Gulino Sonata No. 1, Movement 1, mm. 59-90*

The end of the cadenza transitions into material from the third movement. This section is identical to the second theme of the third movement (starting at m. 83), transposed up a minor third. The similarities end at m. 111, and Gulino resolves the section on a Db4. The trombonist plays a final interjection based on the opening motive, obscuring the key with an Fb and ending on a Bb2. The piano part further unsettles the key – the right hand holds an open fifth between Bb3 and F4 as the left hand alternates between F3 and Gb3. The pianist cadences from a GbM7 to Ab, and the trombonist ends the movement on a Bb1.

The first movement presents several technical challenges. There are instances when the trombonist must incorporate multiple tonguing with swift and accurate slide movements, similarly to the third movement. The cadenza in the middle of the movement is roughly a minute and a half long, and the trombonist must approach this extended unaccompanied section with a clear musical intent.

Final Recommendations

In a conversation with the author, Dr. David Perkel mentioned that much of Frank Gulino's music addresses a need in the trombone repertoire to which few other composers are attending: that for serious, substantially longer works that are accessible to undergraduate trombonists. Matt Vaughn agreed that he would recommend this piece to a strong high school player or young undergraduate.¹⁷ In discussing Gulino's unaccompanied bass trombone piece *First Things First*, Christopher Thomas Brown posits that "Gulino chooses to challenge the performer musically rather than with extraneous technical demands."¹⁸ Gulino's *Sonata No. 1* can be similarly described.

In discussing his selection of *Sonata No. 1: The Journey* for a recital at Tennessee Tech University's Trombone Day, Sam Woodhead of the US Army Band "Pershing's Own" mentioned Gulino's *Sonata* as a suitable alternative to Eric Ewazen's *Sonata for Trombone*.¹⁹ He mentioned that he preferred Gulino's sonata to Ewazen's, as the former

17. Matt Vaughn, Facetime interview by author, digital recording, New Bern NC, 18 July 2020.

18. Christopher Thomas Brown, "Twenty-First Century Unaccompanied Bass Trombone Solos Written by Composers who Play or Have Played Trombone" (DM treatise, Florida State University, Tallahassee, 2018), 55, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

19. Sam Woodhead, telephone interview by author, digital recording, New Bern NC, 15 July 2020.

offers a more straight-forward piano part that isn't as complex, and does not present the pitfalls that the Ewazen does when prepared with an accompanist on short notice.²⁰

Frank Gulino's *Sonata No. 1: The Journey* is a significant and necessary addition to the trombone repertoire. The piece is almost nineteen minutes long, so it may present mild endurance-related challenges. The technical and musical demands on the performer are modest, however, and it could comfortably and appropriately be programmed on a young undergraduate recital. This piece would also make an excellent addition to a professional guest recital or recital tour.

20. Ibid.

CHAPTER II - JOSEPH BUONO

Biography

Joseph Buono (b. 1990) is a composer, bass trombonist, and entrepreneur based in Boston, Massachusetts.²¹ He attended the Peabody Conservatory of the Johns Hopkins University, studied bass trombone with Randy Campora, and earned a Bachelor of Music degree in Bass Trombone Performance in 2013 and Master of Music degrees in Bass Trombone Performance and Music Education in 2015.²² It is notable that he and Frank Gulino overlapped by one year at Peabody, Buono was a freshman during Gulino's senior year.²³

Buono's compositional journey is similar to that of Frank Gulino's. He began taking piano lessons when he was younger, but did not enjoy them until he started playing music he liked.²⁴ He continued playing piano on his own throughout college.²⁵ While there, his piano improvisations began imitating the repertoire that he was playing in orchestra.²⁶ He eventually started recording his improvisations in the voice memos app on his iPhone.²⁷

21. Joseph Buono, telephone interview with author, digital recording, New Bern NC, 15 July 2020.

22. "Biography," Joseph Buono, accessed July 9, 2020, www.buonomusic.com/biography.

23. Joseph Buono, interview, 13 July 2020.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

His first composition, *Fantasy for Solo Trombone and Trombone Octet*, came from these voice memo recordings.²⁸

Upon learning of the Eastern Trombone Workshop's National Composition Competition, Buono selected several recordings from his iPhone that he liked and wrote them into a trombone choir piece.²⁹ Unsure of how to structure his ideas, he ultimately called the piece *Fantasy*.³⁰ He entered his second piece, *Eclipse*, in the Southeast Trombone Symposium's composition competition later that year. In comparison to *Fantasy*, *Eclipse* is far more structured and organized. Buono wanted *Eclipse* to be more "parsimonious," so he decided on three simple gestures to use in writing the piece.³¹

Buono has written five compositions to date. His first composition, *Fantasy for Solo Trombone and Trombone Octet* won first place at the 2014 ETW National Composition Competition.³² Later that same year, *Eclipse* was runner-up in the 2014 STS Composition Competition, and was later selected to be included on the STS Professors' Choir album *Legacy. Elegy for Trombone and Piano* was commissioned by a consortium of prominent trombonists and educators from across the country led by Dr. Cory Mixdorf.³³ *Transcendental Chorales* was first performed in the summer of 2018 at the Southeast Trombone Symposium and the International Trombone Festival.³⁴ Buono wrote a fifth

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.

32. "Biography," Joseph Buono.

33. Cory Mixdorf, Zoom interview with author, digital recording, New Bern NC, 9 July 2020.

34. "Biography," Joseph Buono.

piece, *Song of the Wind*, and performed it in Lithuania, but it has never been released.³⁵ *Song of the Wind* was the precursor to *Elegy*.³⁶

ELEGY FOR TROMBONE AND PIANO

Historical Background

Joseph Buono was commissioned in September of 2016 to write *Elegy for Trombone and Piano* by Dr. Cory Mixdorf, professor of trombone at the University of Arkansas.³⁷ Mixdorf, a frequent member of the Southeast Trombone Symposium Professors' Choir, was highly impressed by Buono's writing in *Eclipse*. Dr. Mixdorf was a member of the STS Professors' Choir that premiered *Eclipse* in the 2014 STS composition competition. The competition was decided by audience vote, and Andrew Goodloe's *Two Sides of Viejo San Juan* won by a single vote.³⁸ Andrew Goodloe was in the audience; Joseph Buono was not.³⁹ Dr. Mixdorf programmed *Eclipse* for the University of Arkansas trombone choir the following year, and later insisted on commissioning Buono to write a piece for solo trombone.⁴⁰

Dr. Mixdorf contacted Joseph Buono about a commission project in September 2016.⁴¹ Buono was interested, though he had never written a piece for solo trombone.⁴²

35. Joseph Buono, text message with author, 21 October 2020.

36. Cory Mixdorf, interview.

37. Joseph Buono, *Elegy for Trombone and Piano* (Self-published, 2016), 1.

38. Bradley Palmer, email with author, 15-16 July 2020.

39. Cory Mixdorf, interview.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

Mixdorf contacted his STS Professors' Choir colleagues, and the project was funded in under forty-eight hours.⁴³ The twenty-member consortium contained several high-profile trombonists and established college professors, further motivating Buono to want to write an exceptional piece of music.⁴⁴

Initial communication between Mixdorf and Buono loosely defined the parameters as 1) needing to utilize the style displayed in *Eclipse*, and 2) showing off the beauty and singing quality of the trombone.⁴⁵ Through further investigation, Buono learned of Mixdorf's affinity for art songs, and he wanted to incorporate this into the piece.⁴⁶ He wrote the piece – *Song of the Wind* - in six weeks, and which he described as “very French, Debussy-style, Ravel-ish, with long melodies.”⁴⁷ Upon receiving the finished part and midi recording, Dr. Mixdorf was not satisfied. Both Mixdorf and Buono described it as a piano piece with trombone accompaniment.⁴⁸ Buono could not re-write it without compromising the integrity of the piece, and instead elected to write a completely different piece for the commission.⁴⁹ Mixdorf requested that the piece include parts for both tenor and bass trombones to bring more interest into the consortium.⁵⁰ He also requested that the piece be

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid.

44. Joseph Buono, interview, 13 July 2020.

45. Cory Mixdorf, interview.

46. Ibid.

47. Joseph Buono, interview, 13 July 2020.

48. Cory Mixdorf, interview.

49. Joseph Buono, interview, 13 July 2020.

an elegy to fit into his upcoming album loosely titled “Songs and Elegies.”⁵¹ Buono asked for suggestions of which pieces/composers Mixdorf would like the piece to emulate, and was given the Rachmaninoff *Elegie*, Dvorak’s “Song to the Moon” from *Rusalka*, and Tchaikovsky’s *None but the Lonely Heart*.⁵² Mixdorf also suggested the Šulek *Sonata Vox Gabrieli*, referring to the “incredible” piano part in conjunction with a “stately and melodic” trombone part.⁵³ *Elegy for Trombone and Piano* was the result.

Buono believed that writing *Song of the Wind* from the piano bench was a mistake, so he approached *Elegy* primarily on trombone.⁵⁴ He speaks of putting himself in a particular emotional state and playing gestures on the trombone to come up with melodic ideas.⁵⁵ He describes this as a dark point in his life, and is somewhat guarded when talking about his emotional state while writing *Elegy*.⁵⁶ In talking about his process, he speaks of “musically encapsulating” the “real depression” that he had gone through in the previous year.⁵⁷ There was a cathartic element, Buono explains, to expressing that pain artistically on the trombone.⁵⁸ After a month of this process, he sent his musical ideas to Dr. Mixdorf,

50. Cory Mixdorf, interview.

51. Ibid.

52. Cory Mixdorf, interview.

53. Ibid.

54. Joseph Buono, interview, 13 July 2020.

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid.

58. Ibid.

and upon approval, “wrote it pretty quickly.”⁵⁹ He finished *Elegy* in December of 2016 and sent the finished product to Mixdorf, who was elated at the quality of the piece.⁶⁰

When talking about hearing it at the premiere, Buono again called it “cathartic.”⁶¹

The “emotional valences” that he had mined while writing it were still fresh in his mind:

“It was the first time I ever heard someone play something that I wrote live. All these things just existed, pretty much, in my mind, and I had written them down on paper as approximations. I’m like “it’s something like this.” And then to actually hear it created right in front of me, and also interpreted in slightly different ways than I had imagined, in very human, insightful ways. It was really emotional. I didn’t really want to say much after it, because it was a lot to process. It’s not that it wasn’t surreal that it was happening, but it also felt like I needed time to process it. I don’t know, it’s almost like if someone got on stage and then read your diary, in some sense. It felt very intimate. It felt so profound in a way, because I knew the suffering in my own life that I had mined, and had put into sound. And then to hear that then played in front of me, it was like “oh man.” It was cathartic, but it was also... I don’t know. In some ways I felt really naked after it, because I had really exposed some... I knew where certain parts of the piece came from, emotionally, the pain... And so to hear it, it was a trip. I wasn’t expecting it. I thought I would just be really ecstatic to hear it played, but it was, um... Yea, I know I’m stumbling, but it’s kind of ineffable. It’s hard to put words around it.”⁶²

It is evident that the journey of *Elegy*, from composition through the premiere, was deeply emotional for Buono. He does not engage with it much for that reason.⁶³

59. Ibid.

60. Ibid.

61. Ibid.

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid.

Performance Considerations

Elegy presents a unique set of challenges to the trombonist. The majority of the rhythmic content in the trombone part is not complex or confusing, but the performer must possess a robust internal sense of time in order to transition smoothly between sections (particularly the 12/8 section at m. 91). The range requirements are not extreme: E2 to C#5 in the tenor part, and B1 to G4 in the bass part.⁶⁴ In differentiating between bass and tenor parts, Buono's choice of octave displacements are comfortably idiomatic to each instrument, lending an authenticity to the piece regardless of which instrument the performer is playing. Interestingly, for the premiere, Dr. Mixdorf played one section (mm. 36-40) an octave higher than written, extending to a D5.⁶⁵ He wanted to explore the tenor trombone's ability to "sing" in that register, and Buono acquiesced.⁶⁶

A study of Buono's notes on *Elegy* further clarifies his original intentions for the piece. His notes consist of two pages of melodic and rhythmic ideas, as well as a small, hand-drawn graph. The melodic content and rhythmic ideas are clearly labeled, though not all the ideas in his notes were ultimately utilized. To better organize his compositional ideas, Buono drew a simple line graph illustrating the emotional intensity of the piece, shown below:

64. Joseph Buono, *Elegy*.

65. Acemix94, "Elegy for Trombone and Piano by Joe Buono," Youtube video, 8:25, March 18, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhQv3sHMKro>.

66. Cory Mixdorf, interview.

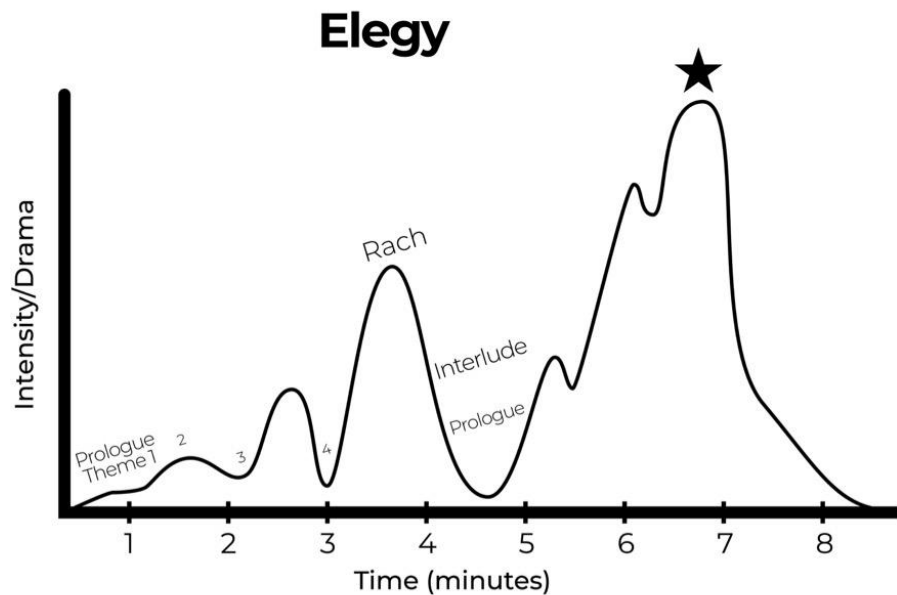


Figure 2. *Elegy Emotional Intensity Graph* (original included in Appendix G)

In the illustration above, Buono identifies four main themes.⁶⁷ In his notes, he identifies three, with both minor and major variants on the third.⁶⁸ His notes also include a written-out representation of the above graph:

**Opening – A Theme – Segue down – B Theme - Sturm und Drang Development -
Climax C Theme – Shosty – Epilogue – Some A Theme - Closing⁶⁹**

Throughout his notes, Buono references notable Romantic and post-Romantic composers, namely Rachmaninoff, Shostakovich, and Brahms, as his inspirations for the more emotionally intense moments in *Elegy*.⁷⁰ When listed with Dr. Mixdorf's suggestions

67. Joseph Buono, composer's notes on *Elegy for Trombone and Piano*.

68. Ibid.

69. Ibid.

70. Ibid.

(Dvorak, Tchaikovsky, and Šulek),⁷¹ they provide the performer with a stylistic baseline to emulate.

In his preparation for the premiere, Dr. Mixdorf labeled certain sections as “emotional character ‘columns of structure’” based on the five stages of grief.⁷² The American Psychological Association dictionary states the following about the stages of grief:

“These begin with the denial stage, followed by the anger stage, bargaining stage, depression stage, and acceptance stage. The model is nonlinear in that the stages do not necessarily occur in the given sequence or for a set period of time; moreover, they can recur and overlap before some degree of psychological and emotional resolution occurs.”⁷³

When presented with Mixdorf’s interpretation, Buono agreed with all but two.⁷⁴ Mixdorf’s emotional ‘columns of structure’ are overlaid on Buono’s original graph in the illustration below, and will be included in bold print in the following preparation notes. Buono’s rehearsal letters have also been included in the illustration below for reference.

71. Joseph Buono, interview.

72. Cory Mixdorf, interview.

73. Gary R. VandenBos, *APA Dictionary of Psychology*, 2nd edition (Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2015), www.dictionary.apa.org/stages-of-grief.

74. Joseph Buono, telephone interview with author, digital recording, Havelock NC, 13 October, 2020.

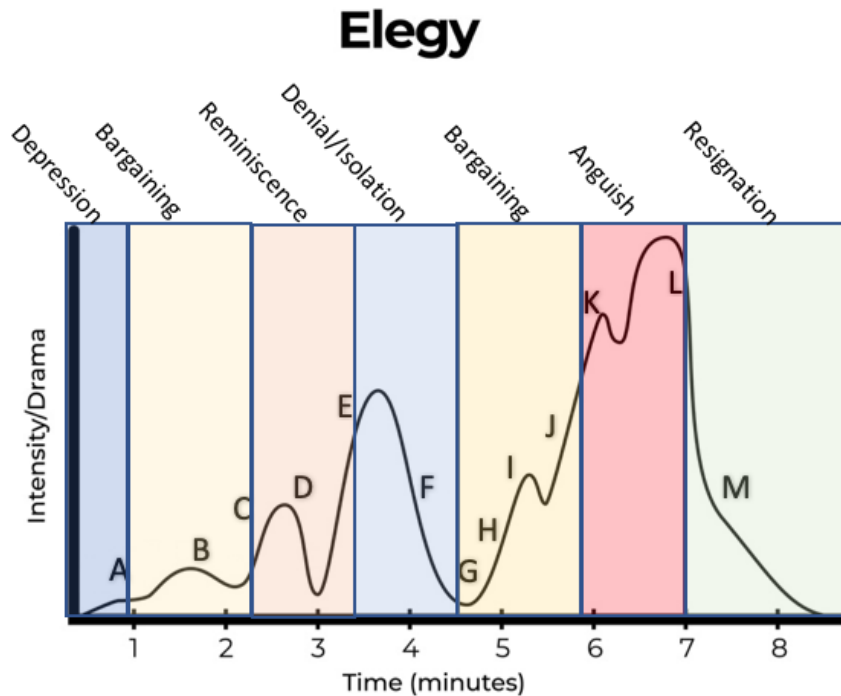


Figure 3. Figure 13: Buono’s Emotional Intensity graph, overlaid with rehearsal letters and Mixdorf’s emotional ‘columns of structure.’

The trombonist enters in the first full measure on a B3, playing material that Buono labeled as “opening/prologue.” Both Buono and Mixdorf labeled this as **depression**.⁷⁵

Adagio (♩=54)

mp **3**
somber

Musical Example 12 *Buono Elegy*, mm. 1-2, *Introduction/Prologue* motive

Buono’s “A Theme” begins one measure before rehearsal A, and the intensity of the piece begins to build. Buono and Mixdorf agree that this represents **bargaining** in the

75. Cory Mixdorf, email with author, 13 October 2020.

stages of grief, but Mixdorf describes it as “more of a moment of reminiscence of memories with the deceased.”⁷⁶

Musical Example 13 *Buono Elegy*, mm. 9-18, “A Theme”

The tempo quickens, and the earlier *somber* and *plaintive* expressive markings are replaced by *doloroso* (painful) at rehearsal A.⁷⁷ The piano part is marked *nicht schleppen*, a marking that Mahler used to indicate “not dragging,” and the only time Buono used German for expressive text.⁷⁸ Rehearsal B repeats and elaborates on the second half of the “A Theme,” and also represents Buono’s first octave displacement between the differentiated parts. The tenor part leaps to an A4, exploring the brilliance of the tenor’s high register while the bass begins an octave down on an F#2, allowing the trombonist to exhibit the darkness and warmth of sound in the bass trombone’s middle register.⁷⁹ The

76. Cory Mixdorf, email.

77. Joseph Buono, *Elegy*.

78. *Ibid.*

79. *Ibid.*

trombonist should note the call-and-response happening between themselves and the pianist in mm. 27-30.

The tenor and bass parts converge at rehearsal C, a *bel canto* variation on Buono’s “A Theme.” Dr. Mixdorf labeled this section as **anger**.⁸⁰

The image shows three staves of musical notation. The top staff is in treble clef and contains a melodic line with a box labeled 'C' above it. It features a triplet of eighth notes and a dynamic marking of 'mf bel canto'. The middle staff is in bass clef and starts at measure 35, also featuring a triplet of eighth notes. The bottom staff is in bass clef and starts at measure 41, marked 'rit.' and 'mp'. The music is in a key with two sharps (F# and C#).

Musical Example 14 *Buono Elegy*, mm. 31-43.
Rehearsal C – *bel canto* variation on “A Theme”

The trombone part becomes more disjunct, with leaps of fourths, fifths, sixths, and sevenths replacing the conjunct, stepwise melodies of the initial “A Theme.” The soloist should approach this section with care, as accuracy is tantamount to expression for a compelling performance. Singing with a pitch reference (preferably the piano) and soft, slow, focused mouthpiece buzzing will give the player a sound foundation from which to approach these phrases.

At rehearsal D, the tempo is considerably slower, the trombonist begins with a rhythmically diminished “A” motive, and the piano part becomes more rhythmically

80. Cory Mixdorf, email.

intertwined with the soloist. The bass and tenor parts are again displaced by an octave, allowing for more idiomatic performances on either instrument.

Rehearsal E marks the appearance of the major variant of Buono's "C Theme."⁸¹ Dr. Mixdorf labeled this as another occurrence of reminiscence (not explicitly listed in the stages of grief).

53 **E** **Moderato con rubato** (♩=96)

mp wistful

The musical notation shows a bass line in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked 'Moderato con rubato' with a quarter note equal to 96 beats per minute. The dynamic is 'mp' (mezzo-piano) and the mood is 'wistful'. The notation includes a long slur over the first six notes and three trapezoidal markings below the staff indicating a gradual increase and then decrease in dynamics.

Musical Example 15 *Buono Elegy*, mm. 53-58, major variant of Buono's "C Theme"

The piano part shifts to an augmented variation of Buono's initial accompaniment rhythm in the right hand over eighth notes outlining the chords in the left, interspersed with melodic responses to the soloist (see Musical Example 15).

81. Joseph Buono, *Elegy*.

E Moderato con rubato (♩=96)

53

mp wistful

mp

59

Musical Example 16 *Buono Elegy*, mm. 53-63,
rhythmic augmentation in piano accompaniment

The section ends with the minor variant of Buono’s “C Theme,” segueing directly into a return of the opening/prologue theme that Dr. Mixdorf and Mr. Buono have agreed represents **denial** before dying away.⁸²

82. Cory Mixdorf, email.

Musical Example 17 *Buono Elegy*, mm. 65-74,
 “C Theme” into introduction/prologue motive

The pianist plays a short interlude from rehearsal F to G, providing the trombonist with the only extended period of rest in the piece. The melodic material at G does not appear anywhere in Buono’s notes, but it does return in the trombone part as the ending thematic material.

Rehearsal G represents a distinct change in character for both the trombonist and pianist. Buono and Mixdorf agree that this represents **bargaining**.⁸³ Buono marks this section *tempestuous*, and the tempo speeds up considerably throughout the section (from 100 to 116). The rhythm in the piano part also pushes the energy and drama forward, moving from eighth note triplets, to eighth notes sextuplets at the 12/8, to sixteenth notes. The largest challenge in this section arises when synchronizing the trombone and piano parts. Familiarity with the accompaniment and a secure internal pulse are imperative to ensure vertical alignment between parts.

83. Cory Mixdorf, interview.

The texture changes again at rehearsal H. The rhythmic velocity in the piano part is replaced by a tremolo, and the trombonist plays a subdued, *agitato* interjection. Buono repeats the same idea four measures later, transposed up by a minor third. Rehearsal I further fragments and distorts Buono’s “A Theme,” leading into the *Allegro* at m. 111. The tempo slows here, from 116 to 104, and Buono marks this section as *anguishing*. This section marks the beginning of the emotional climax of the piece. M. 115 is marked *piu mosso* with a *molto accelerando* through m. 118. The melodic *heaving* motives are derived from the second half of Buono’s “A Theme,” and the tempo fluctuates heavily into rehearsal J. The piano part transitions into rehearsal J with an ascending chromatic line doubled at the octave in the right hand, and a descending chromatic line also doubled at the octave in the left.

The similarity to Šulek here is evident, with Buono directly quoting rehearsal M of the *Sonata Vox Gabrieli*. (see musical examples 18 & 19).

The image shows a musical score for rehearsal M. At the top, a box labeled 'M' is followed by the tempo marking 'Tempo I ma un poco sostenuto'. The score consists of four staves. The top staff is a single melodic line with a dynamic marking of *f espr.* and a fermata. The second and third staves are piano parts with a tremolo texture, also marked *f espr.*. The bottom staff is a bass line with a dynamic marking of *ff*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

Musical Example 18 Šulek *Sonata Vox Gabrieli*, rehearsal M

117

J Andante (♩.=70)

molto rall.

f

f stormy, poco rubato

120

f ominous, molto sostenuto

2

Musical Example 19 *Buono Elegy, mm. 117-122*

In his dissertation, John Douglas Handshoe states the following:

“The title is in Latin, and translates directly to “The voice of Gabriel.” Many believe that the title refers to the angel Gabriel, who in Abrahamic religions typically serves as a messenger from God. In particular, the piece reflects the notion from the Christian Bible that Gabriel is sent to blow a trumpet blast (a trombone in the Lutheran translation) upon the return of Jesus Christ to Earth, signaling the apocalypse.”⁸⁴

The significance of Buono’s use of this quote at this moment should not be understated. When considering the connotation behind the *Sonata Vox Gabrieli*, the gloom

84. John Douglas Handshoe, “Tyler Kline’s *Render: A Formal Analysis and Performance Guide*” (DMA dissertation, University of Kentucky, Lexington, 2018), 60, Google Scholar.

and despair associated with the end of the world adds a layer of emotional depth to the significant anguish already present leading into the emotional climax of *Elegy*.

Rehearsal J is much slower, at a dotted quarter = 70. Dr. Mixdorf again labeled this section **anger**,⁸⁵ which Buono corrected to **anguish**.⁸⁶ The piano part is marked *stormy*, *poco rubato*, allowing for some metric fluctuation under the *ominous*, *molto sostenuto* trombone part. The ultimate dramatic climax of the piece falls on the C#5 at rehearsal K (see Musical Example 20).

Musical Example 20 *Buono Elegy*, mm. 115-131

The minor variant of Buono’s “C Theme,” marked as *agonizing*, descends from the brilliance of the tenor’s high register directly into m. 127, a recurrence of the

85. Cory Mixdorf, email.

86. Joseph Buono, interview, 13 October 2020.

opening/prologue motive, all accented, and at the loudest dynamic of the piece. The bass trombone part mirrors this an octave down.

The key changes to E minor and the texture dissolves at rehearsal L. Dr. Mixdorf labeled this section as **depression & acceptance**,⁸⁷ which Buono corrected to “**resignation**.”⁸⁸ The piano is again on a tremolo while the trombonist plays a quasi-cadenza of sighing motives marked *painfully*. Melodic material from the piano interlude at Rehearsal G returns in the trombone part at m. 133. Rehearsal M is marked *Grave*, quarter = 42, and the pianist returns to the initial accompaniment rhythm, this time marked *funereal*. The trombonist, *desolate, senza vibrato*, plays Buono’s “Sober Ending” melodic material, ending with *smorzando* repeated figures, and octave E’s marked *knelling* at the end of the piece.

140 **M** Grave (♩=42)
p desolate, senza vibrato

146
mp

151
mp smorzando *knelling* **p**

Musical Example 21 *Buono Elegy*, mm. 140-155, “Sober ending,” dying away

87 Cory Mixdorf, interview.

88. Joseph Buono, interview 15 July 2020.

Final Recommendations

Summarily, the challenges in Joseph Buono's *Elegy for Trombone and Piano* do not lie in technicality. It may present endurance difficulties, as the majority of the piece lies in the middle register of the instrument and, with the exception of one eight-measure piano interlude, there are no breaks for the trombonist to rest. The range requirements are not extreme in either the tenor or bass parts, and a strong undergraduate student should have little trouble in the technical execution of the piece. The challenges in the performance of *Elegy* lie in the accurate execution of the composer's intent. The piece is programmatic in nature, lamenting the loss of a loved one, and demands a high level of musical maturity. A compelling performance of *Elegy* demands that the performer possess the depth of emotional intelligence to express, on the instrument, the variety of highly complex emotions associated with grief. Buono's performance instructions are incredibly specific in this regard: *Elegy*, in 155 measures, incorporates twenty-five different tempo instructions, including twelve distinct tempo markings.⁸⁹ There are also twenty-four distinctive expressive terms in English, Italian, and German, twenty of which can be found in the trombone part.⁹⁰ When asked for recommendations in preparing the piece for performance, Dr. Cory Mixdorf's response was one word: "Emote,"⁹¹ echoing my assessment for the need to have a high level of musical maturity. When referenced back to

89. Joseph Buono, *Elegy*.

90. Ibid.

91. Cory Mixdorf, interview.

the composers to emulate, this depth of maturity is absolutely vital to a compelling performance of this piece.

Elegy has grown considerably in popularity, with both bass and tenor players, since its premiere. Dr. Mixdorf has performed it at several national and international festivals, and numerous professional trombonists have performed it multiple times each. As of this writing, George Curran has performed it four times, Dr. Brittany Lasch has performed it three, and Brian Hecht has performed it “ten to twelve times,” to name a few.⁹² It was performed three times at the International Trombone Festival in Iowa City in 2018, by Dr. Mixdorf, Paul Pollard, and George Curran.⁹³

Elegy for Trombone and Piano provides a deeply emotional addition to the trombone repertoire. The differentiated parts assure that the piece is both accessible and idiomatic to tenor and bass trombonists alike, and it would be a comfortable and appropriate programming choice as a musical/emotional challenge for a strong undergraduate, graduate, or professional trombonist. It would not function effectively when programmed as the opening piece of a recital, as it is necessary for the audience to be prepared for an emotional musical journey. It would, however, work particularly well as a second piece on a recital, or a piece to open the second half.

92. “Elegy for Trombone and Piano” by Joseph Buono, Doctoral Project Research by Mark Whitfield,” survey conducted by author, July-August 2020.

93. Ibid.

CONCLUSIONS

The connection and similarities between the composers are worth noting. Both Frank Gulino and Joseph Buono studied bass trombone performance with Randy Campora at the Peabody Conservatory, and they grew to be close friends during the year that they overlapped.⁹⁴ Buono did not start composing until much later, but he was highly interested in the composition projects that Gulino was working on while at Peabody.⁹⁵ Buono also played bass trombone on the world premiere of one of Gulino's pieces, and performed one of Gulino's pieces on his senior recital.⁹⁶

Both Frank Gulino's *Sonata No. 1: The Journey* and Joseph Buono's *Elegy for Trombone and Piano* are significant works in the extant trombone literature. Each work presents its own challenges: Gulino's *Sonata* represents a challenging piece for young students to transition into performing longer, multi-movement works, and Buono's *Elegy* challenges players of all levels to explore the expressive, emotional aspects of their musical performance. Both pieces are substantial additions to the repertoire, and are appropriate additions to trombone recitals.

94. Joseph Buono, interview 15 July 2020.

95. Ibid.

96. Frank Gulino, interview.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW WITH FRANK GULINO, JULY 13, 2020

Note: Text in italics belongs to the interviewer (Whitfield), while the text without italics belongs to Frank Gulino. Entire interview with Frank Gulino occurred via video call on July 13, 2020. All correspondence and statements are copied as received.

WHITFIELD: *What led you to start writing music?*

GULINO: So I remember, as a kid, downloading an early version of Finale Notepad or one of those music notation things, and I used to just get lost in it for hours and hours, and I would just, you know, mess around. I'd write stuff for piano or for trombone or whatever. It was more just like a... like the way other kids my age would play video games or something, I would go mess around on Finale. And I didn't have artistic ambitions, I was just having a lot of fun with it. And everything was terrible, because I didn't really study music theory as a kid. I didn't know anything about voice-leading or chord resolutions or, you know, anything like that. I just knew I was, like, poking around and then the software could play it back, and I thought that was really neat.

I enjoyed playing in band and orchestra in school, but it wasn't until well into high school that I realized that it was something I wanted to pursue, like, professionally. Even once I got to college, I was never serious about writing music. It had always just been, like, a distraction kind of thing that I did on the side, and I was really into becoming a good trombone player. So I was a bass trombone performance major, and I was actually offered more scholarship money to do music ed and I turned it down, because I was like "I just want to get really good at playing, and I don't want a bunch of other things to cut into this. I'm going to this school that's so small and it's so focused, and I have this opportunity to study with great teachers, and I just want to make the most of it, and I want to become the best trombone player I can be." So I put all my eggs in the trombone performance basket, but, as a brass player, you can only play so many hours in a day. Between practicing, lessons, rehearsal, chamber music... at some point, you're spent. Like, you're just beat. So I got back into messing around on Finale and stuff like that.

I just remember writing music in my dorm room as, like, a sophomore in undergrad, and getting to the point where it's like... having had more exposure and knowledge of music theory, even just basic music theory, understanding harmonic motion, and how things are supposed to go and how things are supposed to be structured and how things are supposed to resolve. It felt like, even just my little kind of distraction, like, noodling around projects had a little more meat and a little more purpose. And I wound up, in my dorm room as an undergrad, writing the first piece that I wound up publishing, the Sonatina. It was just a, like a dorm room project. And one of my friends was like "You ever think about getting this published?" and I was like "No..." But I was like, eh, what the hell? So I sent it out. I knew that Cimarron Music Press specialized in brass solo and chamber literature. Brian [last name], who's the owner at Cimarron, wound up really liking the piece, and now I've

worked with him ever since and he's published almost fifty of my pieces. So you never know where it's gonna start. I, still to this day, have never studied composition, never had a composition lesson, never took an orchestration class... I have zero training of any kind as a composer, like, I really don't know what I'm doing. But it's all kind of informed by my experience as a player. I felt like I had a great opportunity to be surrounded by really talented people. You know, just playing with different people in a bunch of different contexts, from large ensembles to chamber music to duets to, you know, whatever setting you can imagine... I had a lot of exposure to a lot of different things, and I think the totality of that just came together to really inform the way I think about phrasing and textures and harmony and things like that.

WHITFIELD: Gotcha. That actually touched on two or three questions that I had. So how do you feel you've developed, since you started composing? You mentioned not having had any formal composition training, and that your pieces started to take off after you got just a little bit of standard "no parallel fifths" kind of training...

GULINO: Right, and let me tell you... I got put in remedial theory. I was not just not good at theory, I was affirmatively bad at theory. I got put in 'theory fundamentals' which met at 8:30 in the morning, and we didn't even get credit for it. So that was not the best. But yea, I mean, I was bad at theory. I'm still bad at theory! But just having to put in some of the work to understand the rules, helped me formulate the way I think about writing music. I think you can hear it in the early works. There's a lot of root position everything. There's a lot of, just like, you know, really standard cadences. The harmonic motion is very predictable, not necessarily in like a bad way, but in kind of like an underdeveloped, juvenile sort of way. You can tell I was still learning music theory as I'm writing music that is going on to be published and performed. But the fantastic thing about that that I never would have really foreseen, is that I hear from college professors constantly who say that the Sonatina is one of their favorite teaching pieces. Because you know, some folks get undergrads who come in and are not super strong players, not super developed, don't have extremely strong fundamentals yet, as opposed to like, at a top-shelf conservatory, right? Like, most students at a lot of music programs don't come in as a freshman as a polished product, right? So, the thing about the Sonatina is, what I was thinking of as the harmonies being predictable really comes across as making the piece accessible to a student that's not all the way there and still has a lot of things to work on. The phrases are easy to hear, the phrases are easy to latch onto, easy to sing in the brain, right? And the harmonies aren't gonna throw you off, it's easy to put together with the piano, and you wind up being able to play a three-movement, you know, multi-movement work in eight and a half or nine minutes. Whereas, some of these kids who come to college never having played a multi-movement work are not going to be able to jump right into the Ewazen or the Hindemith, or these things that explore different clefs, different harmonies, really technical challenges, pieces that are very hard to put together with the accompanist. So what I did by... unwittingly, by writing this piece as I'm still kind of getting comfortable with the rules of theory and harmony, is, I put together a piece that is a really great stepping stone between the one-movement things that kids play in [high school] for their all-state audition and then

the really meaty trombone rep. Like, I put a piece right in between there without intending to.

WHITFIELD: *Awesome. So, since you started, where would you say you've come since then?*

GULINO: I think I'm a lot more comfortable writing uh... It's still not very 'out there,' right? Like, even my current stuff is very accessible, very listenable, has a lot of traditional notions of melody and harmony. But I think I'm a lot more comfortable with harmonies that are a little more adventurous, maybe like a little bit more modal, a little bit more... sometimes you might have two different keys going on at the same time. You know, a couple of weird or different voicing things, a couple of... You know, I use a lot of modulations that are maybe less standard? Just because I let the music almost tell me where it wants to go. You know, if I hear a certain interval, or I hear a certain key that the piece is going into, I kind of roll with it and just kind of see what happens. Then I'll look back and be like "huh, so I just went up by a minor third, or a major third, or whatever..." A lot of times, I just look back and see how, in a lot of the early works, the modulations happened more like you would see in a textbook for key changes, like a kid doing Roman numeral analysis. Whereas now, it's a lot more guided, I think, by the artistic idea than by whatever rules come out of a theory textbook. And, I think it's been good, because when I go back and look at stuff from ten years ago, to me, it sounds juvenile, and less mature, and less developed. It's not that I have any more training since then, it's not that I have studied composition since then. I really have all the same tools in my tool kit, I think I'm just more comfortable with getting a little bit farther outside the box now, because I know that I can do it while still staying 'on-brand' and creating the sound that I think people have come to expect from me.

WHITFIELD: *I would equate it to a player listening to themselves on their undergraduate senior recital... For me, I played the Grondahl on my undergraduate senior recital, and then turned around and won the concerto competition during my doctorate with the same piece. In comparing those two recordings, it's a completely different player. I would equate it to the same type of development.*

GULINO: It's mostly mental, right? And not physical. You have more perspective, you have more experience, but it's still you, with the same horn. It's just the way you engage with the music, and thinking about music, is more mature and more developed. You had mentioned that you've been listening to several of my pieces, probably from different eras, and even though some of these changes are pretty apparent, there's also definitely a unifying flavor to them, I feel like. Like, a lot of people tell me that my music is really recognizable and distinctive. Not that it all sounds the same, but that it all sounds like it comes from the same place, and is kind of written through the same lens. That's something that I've come to appreciate, because I think a lot of people, once you reach a certain point, have that kind of unifying brand, or flavor, or recognizability.

WHITFIELD: *People say this about a lot of composers, the first that comes to mind for me is Eric Ewazen. Everything that he has written after his very early 12-tone stage, if you've heard any of that...*

GULINO: From like, the 70's, yea.

WHITFIELD: *After that, though, everything that's Ewazen sounds very 'Ewazen.' So you hit the nail on the head when you said it's 'on-brand.'*

GULINO: Yea, and I think Ewazen is a really good analogy, because he writes so well for the brass instruments. He writes so much good solo recital literature and chamber music, and yet, while no two pieces are exactly the same, a lot of them have similar elements. You've got the really flowery piano writing, you've got all these melodies that start on up-beats, or on beat two, or something like that. It's just, when something has that brand, it's very comforting. When I see Ewazen on the program, even if it's not a piece that know, I know I'm going to like it. I know how I'm going to approach listening to it. Yea, it's very comfortable.

WHITFIELD: *On that note, do you have a favorite piece or composer that has inspired you as a trombone player, a composer, or both?*

GULINO: I would say Ewazen is definitely one of my favorite composers that writes solo recital literature for the trombone. I like the textures, I like the sounds, I like the accessibility. I mean, I'm a trombone player, so I really like the whole trombone rep. But when I think about things that challenge, but are rewarding to the performer, and are also enjoyable to listen to, I think Ewazen ranks pretty high. Also, a lot of my perspective is informed by playing in orchestras. Not that I sound like any of the titans of the symphonic literature, but for instance, Brahms... I love the way he crafts melodies, I like the motion and the contours, the motion towards and away from different parts of the phrases in Brahms melodies. I try to have a really strong sense of phrasing and melody, so that's something that really resonates with me. I really like playing Tchaikovsky, I really like playing Mahler. I wouldn't say that anything I write sounds like those guys, but just the impact moments, and the mood changes and things like that, it's really compelling. I feel like, somewhere halfway between Mahler and Tchaikovsky is where I would want to sound if I were writing stuff for full orchestra. It's more the effect that I'm really into. The really great composers who have really great command of how to use music make such impacts, and that's what I'm really into. It's more than just "what are the notes? What are the fun licks to play?" Like, Mahler 2, the moment when the choir stands up for the first time... It's like, it's mind-blowing! It's genius! And so, I love those guys for orchestra. And then, really, a lot of the sound... You know, some people have said that some of my large ensemble works sound really cinematic. A lot of my favorite composers are film composers, so I love Jerry Goldsmith, James Horner, John Williams. You have to be programmatic when you're writing for film, right? Because the movie's already made, and you're kind of the last step, and so being able to write music that augments and creates

these visualizations and sounds like what the visual looks like, I think that's really powerful.

WHITFIELD: *That leads me to another question I have farther down the list, but we'll jump to it since you sort of hit on it. A lot of your works have really... not unique, but they're titled, like, "The Deputy" or what was... there was a tornado-based trombone piece...*

GULINO: Yea, yea, yea. That was originally a euphonium piece, actually. There's a trombone adaptation that's a little bit less treacherous, technically, because, you know, the hard stuff is always a lot easier with valves. So Tornado was a euphonium piece that Stephen Mead premiered, actually the first of three pieces of mine that Stephen Mead premiered. Writing for him, there's really pretty much no limits on what he can do. So I've enjoyed working with him a lot. You had asked about titles... Usually the title happens last. I try to write music that is evocative of something, and whatever the inspiration is, there's usually some kind of idea or inspiration. In the case of The Deputy, I had undertaken to write something that was evocative of cheesy old Western soundtracks. And, you know, so I wanted something that evoked cowboy music, and I'd thought really hard about "What makes Western music sound Western? What makes cowboy music sound like cowboy music?" So I remember listening to scores from, like, The Magnificent 7, and things like that, and just trying to think about different elements that made it so effective and so impactful, and still doing it within the framework of sounding the way I sound, and the way I like to write for trombone. But at the end, I had this really fun, kind of cheesy, cowboy music type piece, and I was like "What do I hear in this?" And to me, it just sounded like, you know, this hapless law enforcement guy in the Old West. And I was like "That's... It's like, a little bit tongue in cheek, but it's also perfect at the same time." And so, it's usually "is there some kind of story, is there some kind of visual, is there some kind of scene playing out?" But yea, often, the title is the last thing to happen. And I just try to ask myself "what does the music sound like? What does it evoke? What does it look like?"

WHITFIELD: *Ok. So, to jump back to where we were on the list... Can you discuss your time at Peabody, studying bass trombone with Randy Campora. You had mentioned that you never took a composition lesson, so that was really intriguing to me.*

GULINO: Yea, I was pure bass trombone performance, and, I mean it was great. I loved studying with Randy. He is the most prepared, thorough, conscientious musician I've ever met. When he goes into an orchestra rehearsal, like for the reading rehearsal on a new program or whatever, he has already studied the entire score. He knows the music better than anybody, sometimes better than the conductor, and I'm not just talking his part. I'm talking everybody's part. Like, when the first rehearsal happens, he already knows what the second bassoon is doing the one time they have a line that overlaps in the second movement, or whatever. It's just, he shows up as thoroughly prepared as anybody I've ever met, with a comprehensive knowledge of what's going on, what his role is, how it fits into the bigger picture, and that was really inspiring to me to take that approach of, like, you're responsible for more than just learning how to play your part at a professional level,

you're also responsible for thinking about how your role fits into the bigger picture. And that kind of preparedness is just something that really stuck with me, and really impressed me. And of course he's a great player, he's also a super nice guy. He studied with Dough Yeo, who is obviously a great bass trombone player and teacher. Yea, it was an amazing experience. And Peabody is about fifteen minutes, walking, from the symphony hall. So, we got to go see our teachers in action, you know, in the major leagues, every weekend. So that was really really cool. It kind of gave you an opportunity to recharge your batteries. You put in all this work, you spend all the time in the practice room, and sometimes it's a grind. You're like "why am I doing this?" And then, you know, Friday night, you go hear Brahms 2, or Tchaik 4, or whatever they're playing, and you're reminded that this is what's possible, this is what trombone adds to the orchestra. Like, it would not be the same without a great trombone section. And really, their whole low brass section during the time I was at Peabody was phenomenal. And so, it was the perfect experience, in that it was a small, but very ambitious trombone program. We were close to the Baltimore Symphony, and were able to go see our teachers in action all the time, doing what it was that we were preparing to do. And so many of my classmates were just great, talented people, great people to hang out with, our studio was awesome. Yea, it was a really great experience, and it would be hard for me to imagine having gone to school anywhere else. And as you know, I overlapped with Joe [Buono].

WHITFIELD: *That was actually my next question.*

GULINO: Yea, he was a freshman when I was a senior, though, so we only overlapped for one year.

WHITFIELD: *That actually answers the majority of my next question. Was he writing music while you were there, or had he not started yet? I know he won the ETW composition competition.*

GULINO: Yea, I think that was years later. He wasn't a composer when I knew him. But also, I wasn't really a composer when I knew him. We were both studying bass trombone performance, and, I mean, I had written some things that our studio mates would play on department recitals, or even on their degree recitals. And then there was a brass ensemble piece I had written that I think Joe actually played bass trombone on the world premiere of it. And he did another one of my pieces on his senior recital a few years later. So, Joe was actually an early adopter of some of my music, and then went on to write some music himself. I know he's written some recital pieces, he's written some trombone choir pieces. I really like his trombone choir writing, a lot.

WHITFIELD: *Yea, we played 'Eclipse.' The Southern Miss trombone choir went to ATW in 2016 or 2017 and played it, and it's beautiful. It's interesting that that piece was selected as runner-up the only year that the Southeast Trombone Symposium had a composition competition. And I spoke with Cory Mixdorf last week, and he said that the two pieces that were winner and runner up were selected by audience vote. The vote was split by one vote, and the composer of the other piece was in the audience. They wound up*

recording 'Eclipse' for the STS Professors' Choir Legacy album, and it's really kind of cool looking back at how all this has taken shape.

GULINO: Speaking of competitions, I've never won any kind of competition. I've submitted to plenty for band, for trombone choir, and whatever... and I'm 0-for-everything.

WHITFIELD: *And yet several competitions have used your music as competition music.*

GULINO: Yea, I mean, it's almost a dozen at this point, all over the world, like the Taiwan Tuba Euphonium competition, and you know, you name it. It's been really funny to see how it plays out, like, as a competitor, nobody ever took me seriously because I use kind of obvious harmonies, and I never studied composition. And so it's like 'well of course this guy's never gonna win anything.' And I never did, but now I probably get more performances than the folks that are winning these things. So you never know, I always tell other composers not to get discouraged over the competition culture, because at the end of the day, it doesn't matter... Sometimes the piece that wins never gets played again! And everything that I write is with the sincere hope and intention that people will play it, and listen to it, and enjoy it. I'm not writing to win the competition, I'm not writing for the music to sit on a shelf somewhere. The reason I want it to be accessible is because I want people to love it. I want people to love playing it, I want people to love working on it, I want people to love performing it and sharing it with audiences. I want audience members to love listening to it, I want them to leave the concert with great melodies stuck in their head, you know? That's the experience, that's what I think I can add to music. If I was a twelve-tone writer, I would have much different priorities. You know, you don't write atonal music with the hope that great melodies get stuck in someone's head. So, it's like, we all have things that we do, we all have things that we think we can offer the music community. That's what I go for, I try to check those two boxes every time: Fun for the performer, fun for the audience. Period. If it doesn't check both of those boxes, I personally, with my skillset, do not see a point to writing something that doesn't achieve both of those.

WHITFIELD: *You talked a little about your ideas behind it. Can you speak, in general, to your compositional process?*

GULINO: So for me, it really varies. It's not the same every time. There's usually some kind of germinating idea, like a melody that will pop into my head, or even just an interval. Sometimes it's more of a texture, like if I hear some kind of wide open low piano something. You never know, whatever the spark is, it could be a note, an interval, a phrase, part of a phrase, a chord, some kind of harmony, some kind of cadence... And then, whatever I feel like I'm able to latch onto first, is kind of what I go with. Sometimes it's the harmony first, sometimes it's the melody first. I don't have, like, a system, you know? I think some people are probably more regimented in how they approach it. I just kind of go with where the idea is, and figure out how to expound on it from there. I would say, the majority of the time, I'm thinking in phrases and melodies first, and then figuring out how to harmonize them in a texture, and in a way that feels appropriate to the music.

WHITFIELD: *So in the case of 'Sonata No. 1: The Journey,' could you take me through your inspirations for writing this piece, and then the process of actually writing it.*

GULINO: Well, a lot of people were surprised that, this far in, I still hadn't written a full-length sonata or concerto. I've written a lot of shorter recital pieces, not that many multi-movement works... I'd already accomplished a lot of things, I mean I'd had pieces on the final concert at ATW, and had my music being used for competitions all over the world and things like that... and I'm a decade plus into publishing trombone music and I still hadn't written anything that was like a big, meaty, staple-of-the-repertoire potential kind of piece. And, I didn't have a concrete plan. A few people had expressed an interest in commissioning something like that, but a lot of those ideas kind of fell through, or just, you know, didn't work out. But I had found myself setting out to write something that was kind of slow and pretty, and that wound up being the second movement of the Sonata, and so I had written that first, thinking maybe it was a stand-alone, just another recital piece, you know? Another six-minute, pretty, easy-to-play kind of thing that I've kind of become known for, I guess. Except that I really strongly heard that leading into a more action-packed thing, which ended up being the third movement. Like, the transition between the second movement and the third movement was something that, in my brain, just kind of clicked as like a no-brainer, like, "ok, of course the end of this [the second movement] goes right into this [the third movement]." So I wrote the third movement next, and it's just like, very technical, at least in the context of other music that I've written. There are some really challenging things in the third movement... as you know. I would say it's more challenging and more technical than most of the music that I have out there, and it's got this blistering push to the end and sounds so final, and so conclusive. And then I was like "Ok, but now this only makes sense if I write a first movement. The thing I wrote first sounds like a middle movement, the thing I wrote second sounds like a last movement... This makes no sense." So I wrote the first movement last, thinking that... What I really need to go into all of this great content I've already written, is some kind of really declaratory opening, something that really makes a statement, something that kind of announces what you've got coming. And I was so nervous as I was trying to write this first movement, because I was thinking, like, "The second and third movements, which are already done, I'm happier with them than I am with anything else I've ever written. I really like this music, I really like this middle movement, I really like this finale. How do I set this up in a way where people don't turn it off thirty seconds in, and miss all the good stuff that I've already written?" So that was weirdly stressful for me. I remember thinking that I was so nervous, I was not going to be able to write a first movement that did justice to the second and third movements. And then, by the end, I actually really liked the first movement, too. And I think the flow is great, each movement is just about the same length, they're all about six minutes on the dot... Which I didn't do on purpose! There's just this great kind of symmetry to them. And, the other thing was, I had written the slow movement, heard it going into the technical movement, and then felt like the first movement was kind of the outsider, right? I'm writing this as an intro, as some kind of lead-in to the stuff I've already written, that I'm already happy with. How do I make it effective, but also keep it from just sounding too different? So I knew I had to find some way to tie it all together. And then, once I hit on bringing that melodic theme back, that

appears in both the first and last movements, that was kind of a last-minute decision that I made, and I think that's my favorite part of the piece, is that melody, with the ascending sixth. And just the way it fits with the piano, and having it in both the first and last movements I think is hugely effective.

WHITFIELD: *You're talking about the theme [sings theme from m. 97 in movement I]... So did that appear in the third movement, and then you juxtaposed it into the first?*

GULINO: Yes. I figured what better way to tie the whole piece together, and then also make the return of that theme in the last movement just, like, a really powerful moment. So it's like, every time I listen to it, when that comes back at the end, it's just like, I'm so satisfied with like, the... It just completes the circle, you know? And I just think it's a great lick, it fits together with the piano, and just the interplay between the phrasing, with the trombone and piano, it's like... The collaborative part of it is kind of the most fun thing about playing a recital, right? I mean, I was never really like a fan of unaccompanied music, because, I feel like, it works together. When you're playing with other people, you can create something that's kind of bigger than the sum of the parts, right? And it makes life easier for the player, it makes life easier for the listener. I was just really pleased with the way that worked out. And it think it also helps from a programmatic perspective, like, illustrating the title, right? You go from beginning to end, it's a long piece... There are things about the beginning and the end that are similar, right? You have the same theme coming back, you mostly have triumph at the beginning and the end, but in between there are a lot of challenges, there's a lot of uncertainty, there's tempo changes, there's weird harmonies, there's minor keys, there's all kinds of things along the way, it's not a straight line. And so I think that kind of helps illustrate that [the title].

WHITFIELD: *Gotcha. I was going to ask about the very opening motive... Did you also pull that from the third movement, as well?*

GULINO: I've got my score here...

WHITFIELD: *I'm pulling it up.*

GULINO: Yea, so in the third movement, um... Yea, at the moderato, kind-of cut time thing [m. 43]. Yea, so that's just like a different statement of the very opening theme.

WHITFIELD: *I was going to ask that, if you had pulled the opening, triumphant statement from the third movement or if that was something completely different.*

GULINO: Yea, they're related. And so, that's another way that I sought to tie everything together. That theme is something that I had kind of heard in my head before I started writing any of this. And I think I was originally planning to use it in some kind of euphonium piece or something else that I had going on, but there's just something about the power that it conveys, and it works really well on trombone for that projection, that brilliance, making a statement, you know? That's something that the trombone does a lot

more effectively than the euphonium, and it just, to me, sounded like an opening. And I'm glad that I was able to sort of re-purpose that same material in a couple of different moods, but that ascending sixth theme that's in both movements is pretty much a straight copy/paste, just in a different key. And that's by design, that it's exactly the same. It brings you all the way back. Rather than trying to transform it, or play with it, you're completing the journey.

WHITFIELD: *Gotcha. You had mentioned that you composed the second, pretty, slow movement, and then you heard that leading right into the technical powerhouse that is the third movement. Did you consider any specific technical or musical challenges for the performer to provide a dimension to the piece, or did all of that just kind of come about organically?*

GULINO: That all came about organically. I just heard those three quarter notes leading right into it. The first licks in the trombone in the third movement, that leap of a ninth, and then down to the low Eb, that was something that I had come up with while I was just playing fundamentals one day and working on lip slurs, and working on increasing intervals as I'm slurring. And I was like "Huh... If this was loud and fast, that would be pretty impressive!" And so it was like, for weeks, I would just be like "buh-beeh, buh-bop, buh-bah, buh-bah-bop" [opening of third movement] until I got it down. And I was like "If I can do this, a real trombone player could do this too!" And so, I latched onto it. And I was like "You know what, it's challenging, but it's not impossible. This is grown-up trombone music, like, it's fine." And I just listen to where the line takes you, you know? When I reach a point where I, like, think I'm out of ideas or I'm not sure what should happen next, I go back to the beginning, and I just listen to the playback in Finale, and whenever it gets to the point where I've run out of music, I pretend that, instead of running out of music, I've just clicked pause. And then I ask myself "If I un-pause it, what happens next?" And then it's like, oh, ok! That's where I hear this going. And it's like a stupid trick, but it works. And so, then, I got to the point where I had two movements written, but they were the last two movements, not the first two, and then did the opening last. And I just tried to make it both triumphant and declaratory, but also tie together the whole thing, and set up all these common threads of thematic material. Because there are plenty of pieces out there where each movement sounds totally unrelated, and as a listener, that's challenging! As a performer, that can be challenging too, but especially as the listener. You want to hear those common threads, you want to hear those common themes. The way, you know I mentioned film composers before, how, for instance, John Williams, in a lot of his films, every character has their own motif, right? In every one of his big film series, it's different characters, and different things, they have the same thematic material coming back over and over and over. And it just helps the listener, it helps the audience latch onto particular moods or feelings or people. And so that's something that I've tried to do.

WHITFIELD: *John Williams loves that ascending sixth, too. It happens in the 'love theme' in Raiders of the Lost Ark, it happens in the beginning of Leia's theme, it happens in the beginning Han and Leia's love theme.*

GULINO: Exactly, yea. And, that was not conscious, you know, I wasn't trying to channel John Williams, by any means. But it also kind of goes to show you how a lot of what has influenced my compositional voice are people who that used those character motives effectively.

WHITFIELD: *Right. So did the title 'The Journey' just kind of come about toward the end, or where did that come from?*

GULINO: A lot of times, I struggle to come up with a title, where I'm really asking myself 'what do I hear here, like what's the story?' and I really have to think about it, right? This one, I didn't have to think about at all, it just kind of clicked. There's a lot going on, not only is it, within itself, a journey from beginning to end, where you've got good stuff, all these challenges, and then you end happily ever after, it's like a self-contained journey. But, for me, it's also my first really big piece where, once I finished it and heard it, I said to myself "This has a chance to be a staple of the repertoire in the next generation." We haven't had a new major trombone sonata since the Ewazen, over twenty years ago. Before that, it was the Šulek, another ten or fifteen years before that. And before that, you know, so much of our standard rep is from the mid-twentieth century. Even the Ewazen, which a lot of people think of as the most recent staple of the literature, you know, cornerstone of the canon, is from the nineties! And, writing for the trombone is something that I love doing, have been doing for a long time, feel very strongly about, and part of me felt like I owe it to the instrument and I owe it to the repertoire to try to craft something that really is good, and really is deserving of a place on a recital program. A lot of the music we have is really good, but it's also a lot of the same over and over. I feel like we, unlike these other instruments, like the piano or the violin or the cello, that have literally lifetimes' worth of solo rep that you'd never be able to get to... We still, as low brass players, have a realistic opportunity to shape the repertoire. Not every instrument has that. And so that's kind of what I want my influence to be, I think - to write music for low brass, especially the trombone, it's my instrument, I've been playing it for a long time, I love it. I want to help shape the repertoire for the future, and this is a piece that I think, for me, was a big step in doing that.

WHITFIELD: *Gotcha. And you already kind of hit on how the trombone impacts how you wrote this piece, because you were playing around with the motive from the third movement, so the trombone does have an impact on how you write.*

GULINO: Yea. Have you performed any of my other pieces?

WHITFIELD: *I have not, no.*

GULINO: One of the things that I hear a lot is that, even the technical licks, even the really demanding parts, sit really well on the instrument. To me, it's not something I think about, because I view it through the lens of a trombone player. We have an acute feel for what intervals are really awkward, right? We have an acute feel for impossible glissandos, or crossing partials, or all these little things that non-trombonists don't think about in writing

music. And so I think the fact that I'm a trombone player is really helpful in that regard. Even the things that are very challenging and demanding sit well on the horn and are possible. None of it is really just like, completely insane, or has you doing really technical things in out positions, or crossing a ton of partials, or impossible notes, impossible glissandos. Because we've all played music by non-trombonists that have those elements. So that's something that I think, just by virtue of being a trombone player, I'm able to avoid. So everything from a feel perspective is very player-friendly, just because I'm coming at it from the same place as the performer.

WHITFIELD: *Would you say that this piece relates back to your 'Sonatina' or just, by virtue of that being your first piece, this being your most recent...*

GULINO: Yea... There's not an overt connection, but it certainly... Everything that I'm doing now started with that piece, at the very beginning. Everything that I do now came from somewhere. They are my only two three-movement trombone recital works, so they have a connection in that regard. It's more advanced, harmonically, technically, endurance-wise, range-wise, and I think it corresponds to how much more advanced I am in terms of thinking about music and writing music. So I wouldn't say that there's a conscious connection between them, but there's definitely a connection between them.

WHITFIELD: *Okay. How about your collaboration with Matt Vaughn? Did you contact him, did he contact you? This wasn't a commission, so how did that come about?*

GULINO: Right. Matt is one of the most amazing trombone players I've ever heard. I heard him play Colors at ATW maybe, I don't know what that was, ten years ago, fifteen years ago, something, I don't know, it was a while ago. But I remember thinking "that is the best trombone playing I've ever heard in person." My jaw was on the floor. I have a lot of friends who studied with Matt Vaughn, I have a lot of friends in the Philly area who go listen to him play with the orchestra all the time. I knew he was a monster player. One of my good friends, Dave Perkel, was in the Air Force Band with Matt in the nineties. And it's like, everybody has only the best things to say about his playing, about him as a person, about his musicianship, about his ability as a trombone player. So this guy, Dave Perkel, who, actually, he did his DMA recital about me, also, back in 2013. He's now retired from the Navy Band and teaches at Towson University in Maryland. And he's awesome. He was organizing a trombone event at Towson last fall, and since it was a first-year event, and they weren't sure what kind of support they were going to get from the school to bring in, like, big-time artists, he called his old Air Force buddy Matt Vaughn, and was like "Hey, would you be interested in coming to play a solo and do a master class at our event at Towson?" And Matt was like "Yea, sure." He was excited about it, and was like "How about I play, you know, one piece, and do a master class?" And Dave was like "Would you be interested in doing the world premiere of a new trombone sonata as your one piece?" And Matt, having never met me, having never played any of my pieces, was like "Yes, absolutely." And it couldn't have worked out better. I sent him the music. The pianist for the event, Sophia Kim Cook, is a really talented artist who I've worked with in the past. She does all our solo accompaniment at DC Trombone Workshop, which is an event that I

teach at, obviously not this year because of the pandemic. We've done that, I think, like four years in a row. So I had this dream-team of Matt Vaughn and Sophia Kim Cook, and I sent them the music to this piece that was literally hot off the press, and nobody had ever played it... let alone performed it, nobody even had the music. And we didn't really talk about it very much, in terms of preparation. I really, I trust him as an artist, I trust him as a player, and I trust him as an interpreter of music. All I knew was the way I heard the piece in my head, and the way Finale playback made it sound. My mind was blown by how great their performance was. It was so musical, it was so powerful, and it was everything that I had heard in my head and then some. But we didn't really talk about preparing it, I had just sent him the music and, you know, I saw him in person at the event, and they played it, and it was incredible. And so that's what the video on YouTube is from, actually.

WHITFIELD: *So you didn't even get to hear him in a rehearsal. The first time you heard the piece was at the premiere?*

GULINO: Correct.

WHITFIELD: *That's awesome.*

GULINO: Yea, it was amazing.

WHITFIELD: *Is there anything else that we haven't covered that you find special about the piece? We've covered a lot of ground, I've lot of good stuff here, this is making my job really easy. Is there anything else that you, personally, find special about the piece?*

GULINO: The things that always mean the most to me are, kind of, the effective use of melody and phrasing. I think, both for performers and for listeners, great melodies are the thing that are easiest to latch onto, and are what are the most memorable. And so, I just think the way the themes evolve, and come back, and flow from one to another work really really well in this piece. One thing I was worried about is, in a piece of this length... it's eighteen minutes long, it's the longest piece I've ever written, and I have a very standard kind of sound, right? So I was wondering, does anybody want to listen to eighteen minutes of this? Because I've heard people say "I don't want to listen to eighteen minutes of Ewazen." It's too repetitive, it's too... A lot of people... I love the Ewazen Sonata, personally. Some people say it's great, it's just a little bit too long for what it is. So I didn't want to write a piece that kind of overstays its welcome. And as somebody who really thinks a lot about phrasing and melody, that's kind of where my concerns were lying, but I'm very pleased with the way that this turned out, and I think it's a special piece in terms of... I have about fifty published works at this point, and this really stands out as the thing that I think has the greatest chance of enduring and being very popular with trombone players for years to come. So that's something that really makes the piece special to me.

WHITFIELD: *Great. What suggestions would you offer trombonists who are preparing the work for performance? We spoke in March, and I think you said Sam Woodhead had played it?*

GULINO: Sam did it at Tennessee Tech, and then the pandemic hit. There were a lot of performances scheduled for the spring and the summer. I think it was going to get done five or six more times this year. Obviously a lot of that dried up. Between concerts of mine, performances of my work by other folks, and workshops and events I was supposed to teach at, I probably had about forty things cancelled this year. Like, all of it. Dozens of masterclasses, workshops, performances, etc, commissions falling through, things like that... It's been that kind of year. But as far as I know, Matt has the only recording that's available on YouTube. Sam did it at Tennessee Tech. Kyle Remnant, do you know him at all? He's a DMA student at James Madison. He did it on a recital earlier this semester. My friend James Martin, who plays in the American Pops Orchestra, he's also the trombone teacher at Shepherd University in West Virginia, I think he was going to do it like a dozen times on a recital tour. He's a fantastic player. But yea, just because of the circumstances, the piece hasn't gotten the exposure that was planned for it.

WHITFIELD: *So I guess, what suggestions would you offer trombonists who are preparing the piece?*

GULINO: I would say not to put too much pressure on the technical aspects. Of course you want it to be really clean and really powerful, and all of those things, but not at the expense of making it musical and making it artistic. You know, for instance, there are plenty of spots where the trombonist is playing by themselves, right? There's that cadenza in the first movement. I would always tell performers "Take as much time as you need between phrases. Get your good breath, taper your notes, make it musical, make it organic." So many people will play a phrase, and then they'll just hustle to start the next phrase right away. It makes it harder on the performer when you do that, but it also makes it less musical for the audience when you do that. So, I think my biggest advice would be to really feel the ebb and flow of the phrases. Give yourself time to breath. Make sure every phrase has a shape to it. There are notes in every phrase that your either going towards or coming away from. When you identify the high points of each phrase, and when you identify what notes you're going towards and coming away from, it changes everything. In terms of taking it from this two-dimensional performance that sounds the way that Finale would play it, to really bringing it to life, and making it musical. And so that's something that I'm always thinking about in writing the music, and so if the performer is also thinking about that in the presentation of the music, you're really going to have something that's very effective, I think.

WHITFIELD: *It's funny you should say that, too. In speaking with Dr. Mixdorf, his advice about the Buono was one word: Emote. So it's interesting that you would say this about your piece, and he would say that about that piece. The more I dig into both pieces, the more connective tissue I find. I hope to do justice on my recital when I get to play them.*

GULINO: The irony, of course, is that we both studied bass trombone performance. Honestly, you should see if you could talk to Randy as part of this. I hadn't really thought about it before, but Joe and I just kind of happened into our own paths as writers of music

when we both were being trained to be orchestral bass trombone players. And we never talked about composition with each other, or with Randy, but there's something to be said about how musical a person that Randy is that we both wound up leaving school, and doing more composing than playing. He was more of a creative inspiration, I think, than he realizes, or even than we realized. You know, one other thing about the Towson event, that Matt Vaughn premiered my sonata at: The second day of the event, I had some other pieces performed, including a trombone quartet. And Randy was one of the guys playing in the quartet. And so, in the same weekend, at the same event, I had my new sonata premiered by Matt Vaughn, and then had my teacher, years and years after I studied with him, playing one of my quartet pieces. It was this dream team trombone quartet of Randy Campora, Matt Guilford, Dave Murray, and Dave Perkel. So it's just like, that was such a killer sound. They all play so well, they're all such great artists. For me, it was so cool to see my teacher playing one of my pieces. I'd seen him play all the great orchestral literature, but to see Randy and get to hang out with him again was so cool. So he's definitely part of the whole process, and part of what makes me who I am now.

WHITFIELD: *Thank you so much for your time, and, gosh, we've spent an hour and a half talking about this stuff!*

GULINO: Yea! I hope it's been helpful. Thank you for programming my music. I love our community of trombone folks, but it's really satisfying to get to sit down and have a conversation instead of just being crazy in the exhibit halls [at ATW].

WHITFIELD: *I really appreciate it. You've made my job really easy. Stay safe, stay healthy!*

GULINO: You as well.

END OF INTERVIEW

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW WITH JOSEPH BUONO, JULY 15, 2020

Note: Text in italics belongs to the interviewer (Whitfield), while the text without italics belongs to Joseph Buono. Entire interview with Buono occurred via phone call on July 15, 2020. All correspondence and statements are copied as received.

WHITFIELD: *What led you to start writing music?*

BUONO: Well, when I was at Peabody, I was majoring in bass trombone performance at the time. I had taken piano lessons as a kid, but I hated it. Eventually I started playing music that I liked, like Billy Joel, but then my teacher left. So, I had always been playing piano on my own throughout college. Whenever I wasn't practicing trombone in the practice rooms, I was noodling on piano. And usually, it was just stuff I knew, stuff I heard in concerts, chorales I liked to play from brass excerpts and things like that. And eventually, I noticed that some of the stuff I was playing sounded very similar to some composers, but I couldn't pinpoint exactly who it was. So it was semi-original. I would make up stuff on piano that sounded very much like Wagner, or very much like Chopin, but wasn't exactly either of those guys. So I'm like, I guess I quote-unquote "wrote" that. And so, once I started noticing that, I had my iPhone with me, and I would use the voice memos app and just record little tiny excerpts of things, almost exclusively, at the piano. There were some things on trombone, but most of it was me at the piano playing either different chord progressions that I thought were cool, short little melodic lines... Most of the things I recorded were very short, under twenty or thirty seconds. Sometimes it would be up to a minute or minute and a half, if I'm actively trying to figure something out during the recording of it. That became a habit throughout college. That was around maybe 2012, I started doing that about halfway through college, and I kept doing that through grad school. It was just an interesting kind of habit. I had no intentions for where it would go, it was just kind of fascinating to see ideas develop in that way. Because sometimes I would write something... I would, I guess, compose something a few months later, and then notice that that was a development of an idea that I'd sketched out months earlier. So it was just fascinating for me to see how it was progressing, but I had no aims for it. And then, in 2014 I think it was, I noticed that... I think it was still the Eastern Trombone Workshop at the time, they said "oh, we have a composition competition for..." what was it, it was trombone choir. And it had to be twelve minutes long, and all this. And it sounded really exciting to me. I had no compositional training at all besides, you know, just regular music theory and ear training classes in college. I just had no formal training in the slightest, but it sounded like a really fun challenge. And obviously there's no downside, it just sounded like a fun thing to do. So, I also procrastinated on it, a lot! So what ended up happening was, over winter break, I wrote the whole thing. I had some ideas in my head, like I went back to my iPhone notes and I thought some of them were kind of cool. And those were kind of rattling around, but I had no idea how to structure it. I hadn't composed anything at scale yet longer than a minute or two. So it ends up being three days before the deadline in early January,

and I was home on winter break. So I was able to just hunker down and for pretty much three days straight, I would just eat, breathe, and write this piece... and sleep a little bit. And I was kind of in this... It was really funny, my family would say that I looked homeless during that time, because they would bring me food, and I was just in the zone, and that's literally all I did for three days. I cranked out the piece, and it was enormously satisfying! It was really cool, actually, to write a whole [piece]. I submitted it, and then a month or two later, one of the guys at ATW, it may have been Sam Woodhead, actually, contacted me and said "congratulations, you've won!" I was ecstatic about that because it was kind of just a shot in the dark, and it went really well, but then that was it for a while, until... Well, maybe there's something you want to ask now, because the next thing that would happen compositionally was Eclipse. But if you have any questions, we can go with that.

WHITFIELD: No, this is great! However we want to go, by all means, keep going about STS and 'Eclipse.' The thing that really struck me about that piece in doing my research, and you know this better than I do, 'Eclipse' was recorded on the STS Professors' Choir 'Legacy' album. The piece that won the composition competition wasn't. That struck me as extremely interesting. When I was talking to Cory Mixdorf, he told me the story behind it, that they took an audience vote and the vote was split by one vote between 'Eclipse' and the piece that ultimately won... and the other composer was in the audience. It's just an interesting little tidbit there, that they selected that to be recorded. That's huge, and it's a beautiful piece!

BUONO: Thanks man, I appreciate it. So that was, I forget when that was, I don't know, 2014-ish, something like that. Yea, so that was also like at the end of a semester, and I saw that there was this, again, a trombone choir composition [competition], and I wanted to do it again. So I sat down at my piano, and for that, for Eclipse, I put my piano on basically this synth setting that I thought sounded really cool, had a lot of overtones, really sustained through, and was grainy. It didn't really sound like a trombone, it just had a really cool sustain on it, and you could stack chords like you would with trombones and the overtones would line up in a similar way in terms of chord voicings, and I really liked that. The thing that was different about Eclipse is that I tried to be more, I guess parsimonious, like I tried to take less elements... Because the first one I wrote, Fantasy, was really just a bunch of ideas that I tried to stitch together into a narrative. But Eclipse was more like "what if I take really basic elements and motifs and try to make something from that?" So I took three really simple gestures and tried to build a piece from those things. I wrote it in about a week, during finals week. I was taking classes and everything, but I really cared way more about writing the piece. So I would just take the final, and go home and write Eclipse, and I was stoked about that. Then I found out that it didn't win, but I didn't find out until years later, when Cory [Mixdorf] commissioned Elegy, about that story. At that time I just thought it was funny. I'm glad I didn't find out initially, because I would have been pissed about that, but it is what it is. Then Cory and his crew recorded for, I think it was for Legacy, or some album like that, and they put Eclipse on it. They sent me the recording before it came out, and it was just unbelievable! It was such a trip for me to have an idea for a piece in my apartment in Baltimore, you know, one spring, summer, and then a few years later, have it come back to me at like the most high-fidelity, insanely-great

recording... it was really a trip for me to see an idea boomerang back to me in that way. In some ways, it was more than I had imagined, at least in terms of the sound quality of it. That was enormously satisfying.

But then, after that, I hadn't written anything, really. I wrote one thing, but it was just for myself. Then, it was September 26, 2016, out of nowhere, Cory reaches out to me. And he's like "Hey, I'm Cory. I've played your piece, Eclipse, I really liked it. I'm putting together a solo CD, and I wanted to see if you were interested in writing a solo trombone piece, I don't know if you've done that before." And I was really excited about it because I hadn't done that before, but it was something I was definitely interested in doing because it seemed like the perfect marriage between, you know, my trombone life and piano life and composition. So I was like "yea, I'd love to do that." And then he's like "alright, I'll get back to you to see if it's possible." And then he gets back to me with the consortium list, which was just this who's-who of the trombonists in American orchestras. And I'm just like "holy shit!" That was more than I was expecting. It was more motivating than anxiety-producing, to be honest, it was more just like "ok, I really have to write a good piece" because these are a lot of really legit players, and I don't want to disappoint. So what ends up happening is kind of interesting. Originally, I took about a month and a half to two months to write this piece, which was very French, Debussy-style, Ravel-ish, with long melodies... I sent it to Cory, and he said "Joe, this is really great, but to be honest it kind of sounds more like a piano piece with trombone accompaniment rather than vice-versa." And I listened to it again, and I thought yea, I kind of know what he means, because I definitely wrote most of it sitting at the piano bench, so that kind of made sense to me. He was like "is there any way that you can adjust it so that it sounds more like a trombone-feature piece?" And so I tried, but I quickly realized that I couldn't re-write it without undermining the integrity of the piece. So I was like "crap, what do I do?" So I told him "Look, I think I misunderstood what you were asking for. I don't think I can rewrite this piece, but I'd be happy to write another piece for you." And he was like "yea, let's try that." And so we scrapped the whole first piece, which took quite a while.

So after that, I said "Ok, let's get really specific about what you want. I'm gonna tailor this to this project." And that's when it became really useful, because he said "well, I'm releasing this CD, it's going to be called 'Songs and Elegies,' something like that. And so, really, if it can be an elegy of sorts, that would be ideal." So I'm thinking "Ok, well that's really useful to know." It seemed more like a vague preference the first time around, but now it seemed like he had a personalized preference. And I said "Ok, what style would you like it to be in? Are there any composers or songs that you would like it to be in the ballpark with?" And he said "well, there's the Rachmaninoff Vocalise..." was one of the main ones, there was the Dvorjak one, something about a moon, and then a Tchaikovsky something for the broken heart. Basically these heavier, um, Russian-sounding, romantic but dark kind of pieces. And so I listened to them a LOT, especially the Rachmaninoff Vocalise, because that's just an unbelievable piece. And so I listened to that a lot. And then instead of going back to the piano, because that was my mistake the first time around, I whipped out my trombone, which I hadn't played seriously... I hadn't practiced seriously in a few years. But I whipped it out, and I started playing gestures on it. I'm not sure how to describe it,

that's kind of vague. I would more or less put myself in a certain emotional state, whether its grief, or anger around that, or... it's hard to say... sadness... but something like that. It gets pretty personal here, this part of the story, because at this time in my life, this was after, um... I was in Baltimore for another year after graduation, and that was a really, really hard year for me for a number of reasons, which I won't go into. But I will say that it was the most depressed and anxious and aimless that I've felt in my life to date. And it was a really, really hard and difficult, and dark year. And then I moved to Jacksonville on a whim, and then things started going up from there. But, right after that year, when I was still kind of in the thick of it, he asked for this commission. And then, when he got specific about his requirements, and was like "I want an elegy," that was kind of the emotional state that I was mining... Which was still very real and current for me. So there really was a cathartic element to expressing some of the pain that I... the real depression that I'd gone through within the last year, and trying to encapsulate that musically. And so I came up with a bunch of ideas, playing that on trombone, and then I wrote it pretty quickly. It was probably like a month or something, after sending Cory a few, just, melodic ideas which he gave the nod to. After that, in December, he was REALLY happy with it. He was like "this is great, I'm pumped to show everyone." And then, it went from there. I don't know what's next, but do you have any questions, or where should we take it now?

WHITFIELD: *This is great, you hit on like four of my questions over the course of that story. Thank you! Next, how would you say you've developed compositionally between Fantasy and Elegy?*

BUONO: Ok, well, between the pieces, Fantasy was the first piece I ever tried to write. And it was rather haphazard, because I had no idea how to structure things over longer periods of time. So it made sense, well... It kind of just came out as a fantasy, like one idea after another. Not a broad, cohesive unit, but more like a story that starts somewhere and ends up somewhere totally different. That's where it starts, I just didn't know how to structure things to scale. And then Eclipse was a LOT tighter. I tried to make it very tight, self-referential, things would repeat, using a small number of ideas in different ways. And so I think that was a lot better, compositionally. And then Elegy was kind of, I don't know, it was the first non-trombone choir piece that I wrote. And then, it's hard to describe... I tried to structure it more on an emotional narrative, like it would start somewhere in a certain feeling space... It would go through different emotional states and valences, and then it would have, you know, the climax and resignation at the end. I thought about it more in terms of just the dramatic art. I remember sketching a graph for what I wanted the emotional intensity to be, roughly. And so I looked at that on paper, and I still had holes in it because I was still trying to figure it out, but I had a sense of where the climax had to be, where the buildup had to be, where it had to go back down, where to taper it off... which really helped a lot! So I just had like a little line-plot graph of the eight minutes, and I knew where certain things were going to happen, and then I kind of looked at that graph until I could figure out what the, I don't know, what the intensity had to be over time at different moments. Seeing it visually helped me tremendously, because otherwise it was so abstract that I had no idea how to think about even eight minutes, which, I wouldn't think was that

long, but when you're really trying to structure it into one thing, I just hadn't thought about it in that way before. But thinking about it visually helped.

WHITFIELD: *Gotcha. I would love to include that graph, if you've still got it, in my paper.*

BUONO: God! I can look for it, but I haven't seen it in a LONG time!

WHITFIELD: *No worries. So, you said you would noodle a lot at the piano and come up with ideas that sounded Wagner-esque... Do you have a favorite piece or composer that's inspired you, both as a trombone player and as a composer?*

BUONO: The short answer is no. The long answer is... at first, during college, I think it's really cyclical. The things that excited me the most were pieces that related to trombone excerpts. So I listened to those a lot, naturally. And those are, I guess, by default [indiscernible]. I listened to like, Bruckner 8, or the whole Ring Cycle, or Strauss Ein Heldenleben, things like that. And I thought that was really cool. But, at the same time, I was also playing piano, and the two guys that really got me on piano were Bach and Chopin. I would just work on Bach pieces on my own, just because I loved the clockwork logic of it. And Chopin is probably the best pianistic composer, and I would toy with some of his stuff, too. So it kind of became like a hodgepodge world between... You know, I loved brass chorales, and trombone chorales in symphonies so much. I loved playing them, I loved listening to them. And then I also really loved the world of piano, and I knew that as well. So, for me, it's a bit of a marriage between those, I guess the two worlds, vaguely, of the big brass excerpts, and also the lyrical piano ones.

WHITFIELD: *Excellent. Did you take any composition lessons while you were studying trombone at either of the schools you went to?*

BUONO: No.

WHITFIELD: *Excellent. This is really cool. Can you talk about your time at Peabody studying with Randy [Campora]?*

BUONO: Ok. Randy is a... When I was looking at the questions, the first thing that popped into my mind was "great guy." I don't know if you've ever met him. He's just such a solid, warm, funny guy with an amazing sound, and a great musician. I have pretty much only positive things to say about Randy. The only criticism I have is I don't feel like he was hard enough on me. I feel like had to do a lot of the pushing myself to the limit on my own, which I was mostly able to do. Sometimes I felt like he would couch things too nicely, when it'd be nicer if he'd just said "you sound like crap, go buzz forever." But other than that, he was just a wonderful mentor for the six years I was privileged to have him. It's interesting, because the first year that I was at Peabody is the one year that Frank and I overlapped. I was a freshman and he was a senior, and we were both in Randy's studio, and it was the largest the studio ever was. It was four guys for bass trombone. And I would see Frank at the end of his lessons, just because of scheduling, and that was about it. And I noticed that he was really in shape at the time, like, just really jacked and muscular. And

I was just out of high school, and I was really skinny. And so the way our relationship started, I said “man, you’re really fit, and I wanna be fit, too.” And so we started working out together. And for the whole year, we were pretty religious about going to the gym and working out. And that was the foundation for our relationship which, in person, lasted just a year. But we’ve stayed in contact for over a decade now since then, just because it was such a solid year - I mean, we were best friends for that year. It’s interesting, because we obviously shared some things in terms of interest, you know, playing bass trombone at a conservatory... He’s Italian, I’m Italian... He’s interested in things outside of music, and we’re both working out, and it was fascinating getting to know him. At the time, composition as nowhere on my radar, at all. But it was interesting to me, because I would see him, he would have Finale opened up in his room, and he would show me that he was working on some piece, and then he was really excited when, I think Steve Meade on euphonium played one of his pieces. And he would show me how he was writing stuff on Finale, and it just seemed very, I don’t know... raw, pure, exciting... It was a project that he was clearly really excited about. And it was interesting to me. At the time, it didn’t strike me at all that I should do that, as well... It was just like wow, that’s really cool that he’s writing music that’s actually getting played by some noteworthy people. But that was kind of where our entire relationship started, in person at least, was that whole year at Peabody we were best friends. And since then, we’ve just stayed in contact.

WHITFIELD: *That’s so cool. I’m jumping around questions here. You’ve touched on so much of this stuff already. I guess, if we’re diving into Elegy specifically now. You talked about where you were at at the time. Can you take me through your process of writing it, and moreso, are there any particular sections that really stand out to you? I know you talked about the visualization on the graph. Is there anything that still just really speaks to you?*

BUONO: Um... Yes. I actually just remembered something that I haven’t told anyone, partially because... well anyways, the first theme in Elegy is actually ripped out of Fantasy directly. It’s just, I think, transposed down from C minor to B minor... which I think was kind of interesting, because the first piece I wrote, Fantasy was underdeveloped in a lot of ways, but I still thought that the melody had enough content, and it seemed really appropriate for Elegy. So I figured “ok, that’s a good place to start.” I don’t think about that melody very much, nowadays, if I think about Elegy at all, which is pretty infrequent. I’ll think about the latter half of it, especially near the buildup to the climax is probably the most interesting part for me. Because once I’d sketched out the graph, I saw where the major sections were. But probably the biggest hole was how to get from zero up to the climax in the middle of the piece, and I didn’t know how to do that. I just had nothing written for that. So that part of it was really spontaneous. I remember writing that probably in, maybe two days, and I just put myself in the state of how do I get this from like, it was basically like triple piano and very subdued, all the way up to an anguishing climax? And I would have my trombone with me, and I would play these melodic gestures that were increasingly intense and emotional. That part of it feels very real and unfiltered to me. It’s not that the others don’t, it’s just that I can step back and I know how I wrote those. They’re not as mysterious to me in some ways. But I guess the buildup to the climax is the part that

feels the most unfiltered to me. Sometimes some of those motifs will pop into my head, I don't know why. But out of the whole piece, it's that buildup section.

WHITFIELD: *Gotcha. Did you consider any specific technical or musical challenges for the performer to provide an additional dimension to the piece, or was it just kind of organic as it came out?*

BUONO: Well, parts of it are definitely idiomatic to the trombone, but the things that aren't, I was very conscious of. Like, there's a lot of fifth and seventh position, potentially, kind of stuff... some partials that are not necessarily fluid on trombone. B minor is not a common key, but I did put it in C minor and B-flat minor before, to see if that would fit better. But I don't know, there was something about B minor where it just slotted for me, emotionally, even though maybe it would have made more sense for the trombonist to put it in a different key. Which is kind of interesting, because I figured, you know, I'm writing it for trombonists, but the thing that took precedence was that there was something about starting in B minor and ending in E minor that, it just had to be that way, even though it meant that you're going to have to be doing a lot of swinging out to fifth position. But that was definitely deliberate. The other thing I was really conscious of was range, because Cory said he wanted it to be for both bass and tenor trombone. So I was constantly thinking about what parts had to be played in the octave as written, and what things could potentially be played down or up an octave. And, well obviously if you're going to play a low B, you can only do that on bass trombone. And I think that only happens in the first half of it, but then getting toward the climax is when it gets higher, and that would be presumably only tenor. I guess you could also do that on bass, but I was trying to think about "where is the player sitting in terms of tessitura for long periods of time? Is there any way to vary that?" Because that can get, if you're playing just above the staff constantly, that can be a lot. One thing that Cory said was difficult about performing it is that there's not much of a break in it. There's a few, maybe, I don't know, twenty, thirty seconds in the middle where the piano is doing its own interlude, but other than that, the trombone is playing kind of front to back, which is definitely a lot to ask of the performer. I'll have to admit, I wasn't as conscious about giving the trombonist breaks throughout. I'm glad that, you know, people are able to do it without complaining a lot, because I was just unaware of that, to be honest. I just wasn't thinking about the chops of the performer, because it's not like I was playing it all the way through and seeing how it felt. But, people have been able to do the whole thing, so that seems to have worked out.

WHITFIELD: *Right, right. And Cory took... Correct me if I'm wrong, but as I'm working on the piece and listening to his recording... Was there a section that he took up an octave?*

BUONO: Yea, he asked me if there was a section, I think in the first half, that he could take up an octave, which he did, and it was kind of amazing. It's like, wow, I definitely would not have written that up an octave, but if you can hack it, then go for it, man. But I was definitely originally not hearing it in that octave, he just felt like playing it, and he did. And he can play it really well, so I'm not going to stop him, you know?

WHITFIELD: *Right, that's great. Let's see... Do you think that playing the trombone has an impact on how you write in general? I had written this question before you said that you went back and started writing this piece on trombone instead of piano, so I guess... What impact do you think the trombone has on how you write, and how you wrote this piece?*

BUONO: Sure. The two aspects that I most love about the trombone as an instrument are when it plays in chorale settings, and its ability to play lyrically. And you know, the trombone part is obviously the chorale setting. And it's so infrequent, in the orchestral literature, that the trombone is taken advantage of as a lyrical instrument. When I was in school, I loved... On my recital, I played these Brahms Four Last Songs, and it was so unbelievably satisfying to approach the trombone as close to vocal as possible. The way it affects me, with *Elegy*, I was thinking about it, pretty much exclusively in terms of a vocal instrument. When I wasn't playing trombone specifically, I was at the piano and I was either humming or singing what the trombone would be doing, because I knew it had to make sense vocally. It had to be something that you could sing, that potentially a singer could sing. But not really, because trombone actually has a much wider range than a typical singer. But the gestures and melodies had to be primarily vocal in nature. You know, after playing *God knows* how many Rochuts and things like that, you just get a really natural sense for what feels good to play on trombone, the kinds of melodies and phrases... And even small things, like certain partials or, you know, changes that are somewhat either easier, or just enjoyable to play, you pick up all that passively from playing a lot of lyrical etudes... That absolutely had an effect, both consciously and subconsciously on how I wrote the piece, from primarily a lyrical, vocal perspective.

WHITFIELD: *Very cool. So the commission consortium, you hit on this earlier, had some pretty heavy hitters, trombone-wise. George Curran, Brian Hecht, Nate Zgonc, Colin Williams, and Bill Thomas, to name a few. That's super exciting, but I would have been intimidated. Did you feel any pressure around that?*

BUONO: I didn't feel as much pressure in the sense of, like, a burden or high stakes, or anxiety. Most of it was just "Oh! I really have to write a really good piece!" And not that I had ever cut corners before, but I've got to make sure that this thing was up to snuff. So for me, it was more just like... Alright, no more... It was no longer, like, me just shooting in the dark in my apartment in Baltimore, and submitting trombone choir pieces to relatively obscure competitions. It was actually like, people are paying for this, and they're really good, and you have to write something good. You don't really have a choice. It was really just, more, motivating to me, in terms of writing the absolute best quality that, at least, I could manage.

WHITFIELD: *Gotcha. This is a question that wasn't on the initial list that I sent you but it just popped into my head. In working on the piece preliminarily, and building my defense to my committee as far as why this piece should be included in my project, I came across numbers... There's something like thirteen different tempo changes, and many of them are subtle. Sixty to sixty-six, seventy-two, eighty... And you used, if I remember correctly, both*

English and Italian terminology. It's just very apparent, in working on the piece, that you had an extremely vivid idea of what it was going to be. Could you speak to that at all?

BUONO: Yea, that's actually a really good question. I kind of forgot about some of that. But to start with, the instructions in it, compared to the other things I've written, *Elegy* is absolutely laden with different [expressive markings], but really specific markings. I actually spent a good deal of time figuring out exactly the words and everything that I wanted. I was really specific about that. And sometimes, the Italian words with their typical connotations were exactly what I was after, whether it was *dolce*, or *espressivo*. But sometimes, like, I don't know Italian well enough, and I'm sure performers don't know it well enough either, to get really granular and specific in the word I was after. Because each part of the piece is a really specific emotional context for me, and it was really important that it was clear to the performer what the vibe was for each part of it. So I spent a lot of time on Google, finding different words, looking for synonyms, like "no, that's not quite right," something like that... until I settled on it, whether it was Italian or English, whatever got closest to the emotion I was feeling for that moment. And the tempo changes are mostly from, it's hard to say. Part of it is, I composed it on Sibelius, and I wanted the computer to play it back to me in a way that sounded somewhat fluid. So I realized I had to make quite a few adjustments throughout. It was a lot more fluid that I had anticipated. I think, in *Eclipse*, there are only a few major tempo changes. But this, it's just going in and out of emotional spaces so frequently, and those have... The tempo changes are significant. If something is even eight clicks too slow, then it actually doesn't capture that specific emotion. It actually needs to be pretty close to whatever the tempos are in order for it to make sense emotionally and also be... well, over the long-term, it kind of just happens that way. But I think you're absolutely right in saying that I had a really vivid idea about what I wanted each part to sound like. One of the things I noticed when I started composing is that composers really mean whatever they mark, because it takes effort and time to mark things in the score, whether it's articulation or dynamics. And so, now when I look at Mahler scores, I'm like "Dear God! This guy had a very, VERY specific idea of what he wanted." And he was a conductor too, so he probably wanted to spend less time on that stuff if he could just kind of upload it preemptively. I take a lot of those markings more seriously now in music, because I realize, I'm like "oh! they definitely didn't have to write that." It would be a lot easier to not put in all these little articulation, or markings... It's only because it was important enough that they went out of their way to actually write it down, and for me that was definitely the case regarding the expressive markings and tempo markings in *Elegy*.

WHITFIELD: *You mentioned Mahler. I remember studying the Mahler 3 principal trombone solos. My teacher gave me this massive Mahler glossary, and told me he wanted me to look up every single German term in the solo. And I came to my lesson the next week and was like "How many different ways can you say 'move faster' and 'don't slow down?'" [laughter]. I didn't think about that, but Mahler was extremely meticulous about that. I pulled up my prospectus here, just to pull those numbers up. 'Elegy' is 155 measures long. There are twenty-five different tempo instructions, twelve unique tempo markings, and*

twenty-five unique expressive terms in both English and Italian. That's extremely... "Vivid" was the term I used in my prospectus, too.

BUONO: Thank you for mentioning that, it's really insightful. And it makes me really happy that you've engaged with it at that kind of level, where you notice the specificity and frequency of all those things, and drew a conclusion from it. Thank you for that, it's really inspiring.

WHITFIELD: *Yea! You said it three minutes ago: you didn't have to go in and put all those different terms in. You could just say 'accelerando,' you could just say 'a little faster.'* But you were extremely specific in all the terminology, and it gives me a lot to go on in preparing the piece. You talked about your collaboration with Cory. He did give you specifications... Was there much communication while he was preparing, after you gave him 'Elegy?' Did he send you recordings or anything like that, or was the first time you heard it at the premiere?

BUONO: The first time I heard him play it was at the premiere. After I sent him Elegy, he asked about the one section taking up an octave, he also asked about the climax thing that was really hard to coordinate with the pianist, which I didn't really know what to do about. Other than that, those were the only things I remember him telling me. And then I went to go see him premiere it in Arkansas, and THAT was a trip. It was the first time I ever heard someone play something that I wrote live. And it was kind of surreal. It was similar to *Eclipse*, but it was different because it was live. All these things just existed, pretty much, in my mind, and I had written them down on paper as approximations, I'm like "it's something like this." And then to actually hear it created right in front of me, and also interpreted in slightly different ways than I had imagined, in very human, insightful ways. It was really emotional, I didn't really want to say much after it, because it was a lot to process. It's not that it wasn't surreal that it was happening, but it also felt like I needed time on my own to process it. I don't know, it's almost like if someone got on stage and then read your diary, in some sense. It felt very intimate. It felt so profound in a way, because I knew the suffering in my own life that I had mined, and had put into sound. And to hear that then played in front of me, it was like "oh man." It was cathartic, but it was also ... I don't know. In some ways I felt really naked after it, because I had really exposed some... I knew where certain parts of the piece came from, emotionally, the pain... And so to hear it, it was a trip. I wasn't expecting it. I thought I would just be really ecstatic to hear it played, but it was, um.. Yea, I know I'm stumbling, but it's kind of ineffable, it's hard to put words around it.

WHITFIELD: *No, that's totally fine. Have you heard anybody play it since?*

BUONO: Yea, not live, but I saw a video of Paul Pollard playing it, which was just unbelievable. I don't know if you've seen that one.

WHITFIELD: *Yea, he played it in Taiwan, right?*

BUONO: Yea, it was either that or Japan.

WHITFIELD: *So we're getting to the bottom here. What suggestions would you offer to trombonists who are preparing the work for performance?*

BUONO: Hmm... [pause] Um, I would say that... Everything that's written, whether it's the notes and articulations, dynamics or expressive markings, or tempo markings, are all hints at something. One thing that becomes really painfully evident when you try to write music that's really close to your heart is that you can only approximate it with instructions on paper. So what I'd say is try to suss out, or mine, or emotionally infer, from everything that I've written, something that can't really be expressed with any of those markings. They're all pointing to some emotional state, and if you can try to embody that, yourself, or at least convey those emotional states to the audience, that's really the heart of the piece. I really don't listen to it much, because it's a very emotional piece for me. But for anyone who's engaging with it, you've got to do your best to understand, you know, at least infer which part of the story you're in, where things are heading, what the emotional valence is... It's really just about understanding the flow of emotion moment to moment, which is REALLY different than playing something like Bach, where you can just sit down and play it and it's going to be pretty close, in some sense, to what it's supposed to be. But something like this, it's a lot closer to maybe something like Mahler or Chopin, where every moment, there's something. There are many interpretive decisions you have to make based on your human emotional instincts, and I'd say trust those, because they're probably right.

WHITFIELD: *Gotcha. Do you do much trombone playing anymore?*

BUONO: No. Although I went down to Miami to play this gig with the New Deco Ensemble, but that was right at the beginning of this pandemic, and we only had three rehearsals and then the concerts got shut down.

WHITFIELD: *I was going to ask if you've ever played the piece beyond working through writing it.*

BUONO: No, I haven't played the whole piece. I would really have to get my chops back up to par in order to hack it. I imagine it's pretty taxing to play the whole thing.

WHITFIELD: *Gotcha. It's certainly not a walk in the park. One of the other things I wrote, and this is another thing that both yours and Frank's pieces have in common, they're not technically challenging for the sake of being technically challenging. What did I write here... "The clarity of the musical vision makes it a perfect opportunity for expression without limiting itself idiomatically to bass or tenor..." Basically, it provides the performer a wonderful opportunity to emote and connect on a deeply emotional level with the audience without having to be 'showy.' I think Cory said this in his interview: It fills a hole in the trombone repertoire that, you know, you've got pieces that are really showy 'look at what the trombone can do,' but you don't have a wide variety in the repertoire of pieces that allow the performer to connect on an emotional level.. Whereas, in string rep, that*

stuff exists for days. He compared it to the Šulek, which is another one of my favorite pieces. So I'm really excited about, now that I've spoken to both of you, I've got everything I need for this portion of my paper, and then, preparing the piece for performance. Thank you so much for taking the time.

BUONO: I'm glad you mentioned the Šulek. After I wrote the first piece, and I was trying again with the second one, I listened a lot to the Šulek, because that's also a hell of a piece. It's emotionally intense at parts, and has a really virtuosic piano part. I remember being really intimidated, listening to it. I'd known about it for years, but only from the perspective of a performer. And then when I thought about it compositionally, I was like "man, this is such a good piece." It kind of made me sad, because I was like "I don't think I can write anything like that, it's so good!" But I was aiming for something like that.

WHITFIELD: *I think you succeeded! Thanks again for taking the time to talk to me today. I look forward to getting your feedback on my lecture recital.*

BUONO: Absolutely, man, I'd be happy to hear it. It was great talking with you!

WHITFIELD: *Have a good one, stay safe, and stay healthy!*

BUONO: Likewise!

END OF INTERVIEW

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW WITH JOSEPH BUONO, OCTOBER 13, 2020

Note: Text in italics belongs to the interviewer (Whitfield), while the text without italics belongs to Joseph Buono. Entire interview with Buono occurred via phone call on October 13, 2020. All correspondence and statements are copied as received.

WHITFIELD: *I really only have one follow-up question for you. In going through our interview from the summer, my interview transcript with Cory Mixdorf, and a follow-up email I got from him, there very much seems to be this through-line of... You called them “emotional valences,” Cory referred to them as “emotional character ‘columns of structure,’” and in looking at our transcripts, we never got down to your mindset, your... You mentioned, like, the emotions or experiences that you mined for each individual section, but we never quite got to that. I fully realize that this is an emotional subject, and I want to be really careful in asking the question, but is that something that would feel comfortable walking me through?*

*To give you an idea, Cory labeled the beginning as **depression**. Letter A to letter C is **bargaining**, but more a kind of reminiscence of memories with the deceased. C to D is **anger**, E is a sort of secondary reminiscence of happier memories, measure 69 comes into a sense of **denial** and **isolation**, G is **bargaining**, H morphs into **anger** into L, then L to the end comes across as **depression** and **acceptance**. Again, I fully understand that it may be an emotional topic for you, so if you’re not comfortable with that, or are not comfortable with it being in the paper, I apologize for asking. However, as I was getting into the research, I realized I’d never gotten down to the composer’s original intent, and I really feel like that could deeply inform the performer in their preparation of the piece. So is that something you would feel comfortable walking me through?*

BUONO: Yea, I think it’s a really insightful question, and even hearing Cory’s interpretation of some of the parts... It brought a lot of it back to me in a good way, because what he said, in characterizing different parts as being either depression or reminiscing or any kind of things like that are quite accurate. It might be easier for me to almost walk through it in reverse, for some reason. So the last part is... I mean one word for it would be ‘acceptance.’ It’s not such, um... It’s hard to say, it’s not like you accept and everything’s great, it’s more just... And there’s not reluctance to it, either, it’s just the way it is kind of thing. I don’t really know what the word for it is, the closest would be acceptance, but it’s not like a cheerful, positive acceptance. It’s just like that’s kind of how it is.

WHITFIELD: *Right. One of the things you had mentioned in our first interview was... It wasn’t acceptance, I think the term you used in the interview was “resignation.”*

BUONO: Yes, that's perfect. Yea, that's exactly right. In the section... Well, the whole buildup to the climax is increasing anguish, essentially. And then, I think the rest of it, Cory was pretty spot-on in terms of his interpretation.

WHITFIELD: *Ok, gotcha. Alright, well, that took six and a half minutes! If he hit the nail on the head with the rest of that, there's no need to walk through it with a super fine-toothed comb. That's fantastic, the way that you and he put that together are going to add a really unique, insightful angle to the paper. I really appreciate you taking the time to explore that with me.*

BUONO: Absolutely, man. I mean it's a very insightful question... Yes, like people... I guess I feel differently about music theory now that I'm older. Yes, you can talk about harmonies and time changes, and things like that, but the core of it is really what you just asked. And for me, it almost gives me shivers that I can hear Cory's interpretation, and it aligns almost identically with what the kind of feeling space it came from. And for me now, that is the soul of the piece, and also probably a lot of other music, too. So kudos to you for coming up with such an insightful question.

WHITFIELD: *Thank you so much for that. That's really reassuring, I was actually really nervous about asking the question. It was so obvious, digging back through our interview, how deeply emotional and close to your heart the piece is, so I really appreciate you taking this eight minutes with me!*

END OF INTERVIEW

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW WITH CORY MIXDORF, JULY 9, 2020

Note: Text in italics belongs to the interviewer (Whitfield), while the text without italics belongs to Cory Mixdorf. Entire interview with Cory Mixdorf occurred via video call on July 9, 2020. All correspondence and statements are copied as received.

WHITFIELD: *Could you describe the commission and collaboration process you went through with Joe Buono? At the time, he had only written two pieces, but he was essentially battling 1,000 on compositions – his first piece won the ATW competition, and his second was runner-up for the STS competition (and recorded for the Legacy album)... What led you to Joe Buono, and how did that all work out?*

MIXDORF: So, same thing that happened with you, at the 2015 Southeast Trombone Symposium performed his *Eclipse*, and I just fell in love with that work. My trombone choir played it the year afterwards, just because it's such an incredible piece. Then, of course, the trombone choir, the STS Professors Choir, recorded it for the *Legacy* album, because we were all just floored by it. I don't know if you've run across Brad Palmer, talking to him at all. Do you know the story about how this piece actually got runner-up in that competition?

WHITFIELD: *No, I don't.*

MIXDORF: Ok. So there was an audience vote to see which piece would win. And, so, I don't remember how many pieces were total, but there were two that got lots of votes. One was Joe Buono's, and I don't remember the name or the composer of the other piece. Do you know what it was?

WHITFIELD: *The other piece was like a Latin-inspired piece, I looked it up. It hasn't been recorded or anything anywhere. It struck me as very interesting that Eclipse had been recorded, but the winning piece had not.*

MIXDORF: Yea, we never even played that winning piece with the Professors Choir, because... Both pieces got the same number of votes, except the piece that won got one more vote, and the composer was in the audience. So, everyone in the trombone ensemble, we all played *Eclipse*, and were like "wow, how did this piece not win?" even though I don't think we even read the other piece.

WHITFIELD: *The recording on that composer's website, I went and sought it out, is actually, I guess the reading of that piece that the Professors Choir did at some point.*

MIXDORF: Well we must have done it, then, because I've been at every single STS, so we must have at least read it and I don't remember it, so I guess that tells you the sticking power of that piece. Anyway, so yea, we played *Eclipse*, and I just thought "man, this guy

really knows how to bring out the soft, beautiful side of the trombone. We need to get this guy to write a solo piece.” So I spoke to a few people in the STS choir about, you know, would you be interested in doing a consortium, and people said “yea, yea, that’s great.” So, you know, at the time, I took that as people voicing some support of that, but then eventually I was like “Ok, well, let’s make this happen.” And I basically just contacted all the STS Professors Choir people and I had the thing funded within, like, I think a day or two days of people, you know, emailing back and saying “yea, I’m totally in for this.”

WHITFIELD: *Very cool. So, during the compositional process, did you communicate much with [Buono] or he much with you, since you’re the lead commissioner? If so, what did you guys talk about as he’s writing this piece?*

MIXDORF: Right. Well, right off the bat, I told him I wanted it to utilize the same sort of style he displayed in *Eclipse*, something that really just shows off how incredibly beautiful the trombone can be... something that shows the singing quality of the instrument, which I think exactly did. After researching me a little bit, he found out that I’m a big fan of performing art songs on trombone, you know, vocal songs on trombone. So he wanted to incorporate some of that too, and so I was all about that, because that’s exactly what I was looking for. I suggested maybe make it an elegy, because I am in the process of recording a CD, and I knew a long time ago it was gonna be based on art songs and elegies. And I said “you know, maybe if you wanna call it *Elegy*, that way I can very easily put it on my cd project.” And we’ll talk in a future question here about this, but the original composition he wrote wasn’t an elegy, but I’m glad we ended up with this elegy. And the only other thing that I asked him to set up in advance was that there’s a tenor version and a bass version.

WHITFIELD: *Ok, so that was your choice, not his?*

MIXDORF: Yes. And that’s mainly to bring in more interest in the consortium.

WHITFIELD: *Gotcha. That was something that was really interesting to me in looking through the piece itself, how it’s not just a blanket octave transition in any one spot. I thought it was really carefully and thoughtfully done as to where he moved octaves to make it more idiomatic for both instruments. I thought that was great, and it was another thing that drew me to this piece once I started digging into it.*

MIXDORF: Yea, it doesn’t come across as “Oh, well this is obviously a bass trombone version of a tenor piece” or whatever, you know? They both sound like they’re individual pieces. And I guess that transitions into how we communicated and what it originally was. He originally created it as a piece entitled *Song of the Wind*. And he sent me a score, a part, and a midi file, to listen to how it would go, but it really just sounded like a piano concerto with some trombone background harmonies. It was very rhythmically simplistic in the trombone part, melodically simplistic, and it was very active in the piano part – which I didn’t mind, except for the fact that it was way overshadowing the trombone part. So I wrote back, you know, this is I think the first time or one of the first times I’ve been

involved in this sort of a thing, especially leading the whole thing, and so I wanted to be really gentle with criticisms. I didn't want him to be offended in any way. So, I suggested that maybe if he thought of the Šulek *Sonata*, something that has an incredible piano part, yet at the same time has a very stately and melodic trombone part as well. He replied to that saying that "you know what, now looking back, I admit, I did kind of use a pianistic perspective" when he wrote that first edition, uh, that first version. And he really just wanted it to be kind of what we wanted it to be, so he just scratched that, and went to the initially-proposed elegy idea.

So, again, knowing that I really liked art songs, he asked for some suggestions from me of ones that I really like, and styles to maybe imitate. So what I said is "I really enjoy the kind of general ideas and melodies that I hear from pieces like Tchaikovsky's *None but the Lonely Heart*, and the aria from *Rusalka* entitled "Song to the Moon" by Dvorak, and the Rachmaninoff *Elegy* that's pretty famous in the trombone world. Joe Alessi has a great recording of that. So then he did all that, he came through and gave us exactly that, and it's fantastic.

WHITFIELD: *I guess that sort of covers the next question, as well. Did you make any technical or musical suggestions that he employed beyond the initial 'Song of the Wind' transitioning into the 'Elegy' that it finally became?*

MIXDORF: Yea, I think originally I told him I wanted it to be very songlike, but that doesn't mean it can't be technical in some ways. And I think, even though I said that, in his first version, he wanted to steer clear of being too technical in the trombone part. So then in the second version, it remained very songlike, but at the same time it isn't technically easy, which I wanted – I wanted something that would be, um, not something that like a college freshman could play, but yet at the same time, not something that only the top-tier trombonists in the world could play. Other than that and what I've already mentioned, that's really the only suggestions I gave.

WHITFIELD: *Okay. I'm not sure I would steer a freshman away from a piece like this, if they had the range to do it. It's not technically above the level of your average first-year trombone student.*

MIXDORF: I also consider the fact that there are some places, and you may have listened to my premier recording, but there are some places where I took it up the octave. So I guess in my mind that's what comes to mind, and that might not be something that a freshman could do. But you're right, I guess, as written, a freshman could pull it off. However, there are some very interesting rhythmic interplays between the piano and the trombone that can be hard to do at a younger age, I think, unless you're, you know, top of the tier.

WHITFIELD: *Gotcha. Now, those places that you took it up an octave, I was wondering if those were in an earlier edition, or...*

MIXDORF: No, I did ask him, I was like “I’d like to take a couple of these spots up.” I don’t remember if it was one or two places, to get that high, singing, beautiful quality of the trombone in there. And he was like “No, go for it!” So it’s not in the print anywhere, in my copy, or even in the one he’s putting out now. I just kind of penciled it in myself, because I thought it fit.

WHITFIELD: *It did make sense. It’s interesting, as I’m working on the piece, going back to your recording and Paul Pollard’s recording, I think there are a couple of places in the piece where, as I’m playing, I went “this doesn’t sound the way I remember hearing it...” So that clears that up. We also touched on the recommendation to a student, maybe steering a first-year student away from it. How would you describe this piece to your students? And then, by the same token, how would you talk about it to another professional who wasn’t a part of the consortium, or who is looking for another piece to play on a recital, or anything along those lines?*

MIXDORF: The first word that comes to mind is ‘dramatic.’ It’s incredibly dramatic and emotional. You know, when I assign a student the Grondahl, I always have them write in all caps DRAMA at the top, because if you don’t put drama in it, it’s really kind of boring. And this piece is even moreso. So I guess, I might mention this later on, another reason I might not assign this to a younger student is it requires a lot of musical maturity as far as emoting, and not just playing the notes and rhythms exactly as they are, but having some ebb and flow, and the drama factor. Dramatic is the first word that comes to mind, and I would tell that to anyone asking about it, and how incredibly effective it is at drawing out the emotions of grief as it relates to an elegy. In a piece of music, I’m not sure I can think of any other piece that does it equally as well... Maybe the Šulek, that definitely has a strong story line as well, but very few other pieces.

WHITFIELD: *So what about talking to another professional? Someone is looking for another piece to play on a recital, how would you talk to a colleague?*

MIXDORF: Yea, anytime someone’s asking me for new rep to put on a recital that’s not played much, I automatically suggest the Buono because it’s so incredible. I guess this goes a little bit into that next question about where this fits in a recital program. I put it second, but I didn’t do that for aesthetic reasons, I put it there for stamina reasons. I can’t remember what else was on that program, but that’s where it fit best chop-wise. I don’t think I would open a recital this way, I might open the second half of a recital this way. I don’t think I did a very good job when I played this in a recital of doing this, but I think the audience kind of needs to be prepared for it a little bit. I think I made up for that in the fact that I didn’t program it that way, but I took a few minutes beforehand to talk about it, and to try to put the audience’s mind and emotions in the right place.

WHITFIELD: *That makes a lot of sense. You had mentioned before that it does a really good job of drawing out grief in the sense of an elegy. Did you give Buono any other guidance regarding that, or did you basically just say “Write an elegy... Go!”?*

MIXDORF: I basically just said “write an elegy... Go!” Closer to the premiere, I asked him “is this based on a certain death in your family, or someone you know?” He said that it was, but it was too close to home for him to talk about it. So I don’t know who or what, but it was based on some real emotions that he was having. And you know, when I did talk to the audience about it, I kind of mentioned, I can’t remember them now, but the seven stages of grief. I don’t remember which psychologist came up with that, but there’s the seven stages of grief. And you can find places in this piece where you’re hitting all seven of them.

WHITFIELD: *That makes a lot of sense. One of the responses to my survey, there was a student that mentioned it had something to do with mental illness. Your story kind of trumps that, because you were directly in contact with the composer.*

MIXDORF: Yea, and that’s another great thing about this piece is that the performer can take it to mean what they want it to mean, and really kind of use it in that way.

WHITFIELD: *So after you got the piece, how did you prepare for the challenges that it presents in prepping for the premiere? Because the only thing you had was the sheet music and a MIDI mock-up.*

MIXDORF: Right, right. Which I loved, because I had freedom. There were no preconceived notions about how certain things go. I had freedom to make it the way I wanted to make it. So I really enjoyed that, and it sort of leads me to what I do with my students. When they’re picking a jury or recital piece, I like them to listen to a recording a little bit at the beginning just so they can kind of get a feel for it, and whether they’ll enjoy it enough to play it. But then after that, I encourage them not to listen to recordings for a good long time while they’re learning it, so that recordings don’t influence too much how they perform it. But again, I didn’t have that problem, because there was no recording! And again, the piece is right up my alley, musically. So it wasn’t incredibly challenging for me to inject emotion and musicality into it. I wasn’t really challenged at all. I of course had to take the time to make certain decisions, but I wouldn’t call it challenging. After the premiere, he did have one tempo request. Or not a request, but I sat him down and said “ok, let me know what you think of the premiere, would you have changed anything?” I can’t remember what it was, but I remember doing one section a little bit faster than notated, and he noticed that. But I’m not sure I would change it, because I kind of like the way I do it better than what’s written. It’s somewhere on the second page, I can’t remember specifically.

WHITFIELD: *So that was the only suggestion he made, then. Did you send him recordings or anything before the premiere?*

MIXDORF: I did not. But he came, so this was premiered at the Arkansas Trombone Workshop of that year, 2016 I think. He came down, he flew in for it. He was here a day early so he could hear me rehearse it. Gosh, I think he did... Actually, he was supposed to come in early and then his flight got delayed, so he didn’t hear it that evening, so actually,

you know what, I think the premiere might have been the first time he heard it. But that was all he said, he had a lot of really kind things to say, too. He really liked the range of dynamics I used, and the fact that I really made it come to life. He just had that one comment about tempo, I'm sorry, I wish I could remember exactly where it was.

WHITFIELD: *I can probably go do some diligent, studious work and find it.*

MIXDORF: With a metronome, right.

WHITFIELD: *So having given the premiere, does that have any sort of influence on how you would approach this particular piece, or other pieces now that you've premiered this work. You said this was your first lead commission, your first premiere, so I guess the question is does that have any influence on how you approach this piece with your students, but I want to apply that more generally, and ask if it's changed your idea of how you approach music in general with your students?*

MIXDORF: I always go back and forth in my head about how strictly we should keep to what the composer wrote. And I always generally try to encourage students to respect what the composer wrote, but when it comes time, I'm the one performing it, and I'm trying to make a musical and emotional statement, and I might want to change some things to make that happen. So, especially with the older students, we talk about that... This is what the composer wrote, so you should at least practice it that way several times. But then if you feel like your musical product should change a little bit because you're trying to convey a certain sort of message, then do it. As long as it's not totally drastically different from the composer's original intentions. So I guess that that's something that I encourage maybe a little bit more than before.

WHITFIELD: *Gotcha. So in that same vein, what suggestions would you offer to trombonists who are preparing the work for performance?*

MIXDORF: Right, so um... EMOTE. The one word suggestion is emote. You know, I guess going forward, playing a few simple art songs that have words with them, so that you don't have to create any sort of story can be like a training wheel sort of thing. It's like, Ok, how can I make this message that someone has created come to life with this music? And I do that with my young students, too. Or I'll take a very simple melody from the Cimeria book and say "Ok, you need to write words to this, so that you have something to convey other than just notes and rhythms." But, you know, this piece is probably too long to sit down and write words and lyrics to the whole thing. But at the very least, it does have deliberate sections, like I said that, to me, sort of reflect the different stages of grief. And so, a student doesn't necessarily have to do that, but they do need to kind of think "Ok, what is this section about?" I mean it's called an elegy, so I think that the performer does need to think about "Ok, this is about someone's death." And I'll even tell them, to me, what I would do before performing this is I would literally put myself in the place of "what would my mind and body go through if I had learned that one of my children just died?" Which really kind of centers me, and it almost brings me to tears before I play a single

note. Because there would be a lot of anger, there would be a lot of sadness, there are moments of, like, major keys, and maybe glimmers of happiness. To me, that's kind of looking back at the happy memories that you had with whatever person. But you know, those things need to happen, you cannot just play this piece as just notes and rhythms, it will fall flat and will not be effective at all.

WHITFIELD: *Actually, that leads me to ask you a question that's not on the list... You said that Joe told you it was about a specific death in the family, so I was going to ask what you do to put yourself in that headspace, but I think you just answered that.*

MIXDORF: Yea, and that's a hard thing to do. It's a risky thing to do. I have five kids, so to imagine any of them coming down with a debilitating disease, or dying in a car accident on the way home from the grocery store... it's kind of hard to move on from that thought, but if you can channel that into the music, you'll be successful.

WHITFIELD: *Do you have any other thoughts or comments on the piece that may be pertinent to the final project? Because it's so new, I had to give some justification to my committee regarding what I called it's 'staying power' in the repertoire. You know, what makes the Šulek the Šulek, what makes the Grondahl the Grondahl? Why are these pieces around 30, 40, 80+ years after the composer died... Do you have any thoughts on that?*

MIXDORF: First of all, one thing that has nothing to do with the music itself, but the list of people who were on the consortium and that are playing this piece. That in and of itself is gonna give it some staying power. So Paul Pollard has actually, now, you said you listened to a recording, was it a Youtube recording?

WHITFIELD: *Yea, it was from a festival in Asia, I think.*

MIXDORF: Ok, SliderAsia, I think probably. Yea, he's playing it a lot. Actually, at the International Trombone Festival that was in Iowa City, it was performed three times. Paul played it, George Curran played it, and I played it. So, that was a very successful ITF, not because of this piece, but there were a lot of people there, it was a great event, and I know a lot of people came to those recitals, so that gives it a lot of exposure. Every time I play this piece, a lot of people comment, like if I play it in a recital, they'll comment on how that was their favorite piece. Paul has actually recorded it for an album. He recorded it in February or March, it hasn't come out yet. So that'll be out there soon. I was supposed to record it in May, but due to COVID, that didn't work out. But I'm going to be recording it next May, so that'll come out soon as well. But going back to the music itself, it's something that everyone can relate to in the audience. It's not musically challenging to listen to, and the message can be very clearly conveyed. I wish we had more of that in the trombone repertoire. We have just a lot of fancy, technical, look-what-the-trombone-can-do sort of stuff, but that don't connect well, I think, with the audience because they miss one or two of those things. So this piece connects well because it's easy to digest as an audience member. I know that Paul, actually, he wasn't successful, but a few years ago, he

wanted to make this the competition piece for one of the ITF competitions. It didn't happen yet, but something tells me he'll probably keep trying to fight for that.

END OF INTERVIEW

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW WITH MATT VAUGHN, JULY 18, 2020

Note: Text in italics belongs to the interviewer (Whitfield), while the text without italics belongs to Matt Vaughn. Entire interview with Vaughn occurred via phone call on July 18, 2020. All correspondence and statements are copied as received.

WHITFIELD: *Was there a collaborative process between you and Frank?*

VAUGHN: Not really, because, I'll tell you the story. It might actually be good for you to contact David Perkel, I don't know if Frank has mentioned him. He teaches at Towson University, and he and I were in the Air Force Band together back in the nineties. We're good friends from being in that band together, and he wanted to start a trombone symposium. I guess it ended up being the Towson University Eastern Trombone Workshop, because the Eastern Trombone Workshop used to be hosted by Towson University before it was taken over by the Army Band. I'm not sure the whole history of that, it may have been at the Navy Band, then the Army Band... Anyway, so he ended up asking me to do it, he talked to me in, like, October 2018, so a year before. And then in March of 2019, he went like "Oh, Frank Gulino's written this new sonata. Would you be willing to premiere it?" So he had already written it before I was aware of it. I'm not sure of the connection between Dave and Frank, how that came about, but it was really Dave that was the impetus behind getting this piece on this trombone workshop. So I got it in March and checked it over and said I'd love to do it. Then I started working on it in the summer in earnest. Then I played it in September 2019. So that's the history, it was written before I got it. But it was great, he's a trombonist, a bass trombonist, so he knows how to write for the trombone. It's well-spaced, you know, there's good rest in it. It has a wide range, but it's not too extreme, even though it's a little on the longer side, like at seventeen, maybe seventeen or eighteen minutes. There's plenty of space. Are you more of a tenor or bass trombonist?

WHITFIELD: *Tenor.*

VAUGHN: Tenor, OK.

WHITFIELD: *Yes sir. Did you communicate with Frank much while you were preparing the piece? I think when I talked to him, he said he didn't hear it until the premiere, like he didn't hear it in a rehearsal or anything.*

VAUGHN: Right, yea. No, I didn't, really [chuckles]. There really wasn't much to talk about. And we only rehearsed... I had the piano part, and the trombone part. I could play through the piano part, it's not too challenging. I'm not a great pianist, but I could play through it enough to get a sense of what the piano part was like. So I would do that on my piano, and kind of sing along with the trombone part to get that in my head. And then I just had one rehearsal... yea, just one rehearsal with the pianist and then we premiered it.

WHITFIELD: *Gotcha. Let's jump to talking about the piece, then. I'm going to skip my next questions since it wasn't a commission or anything. How would you describe the merits of the piece to your students?*

VAUGHN: It's a great piece for a recital. Well, first of all, it's a lengthy, serious piece that is very doable. It's challenging, it certainly has its challenges in there. But it feels good to play, I think. It's so melodic. You know, *The Journey*, it has such an epic sounding name. It's very approachable. I think that's a positive and negative to me, it doesn't challenge the audience too much, but it depends on who you're playing for and what you're going for, but I think it's very approachable. I would say a good high school player could play it, it's not terribly demanding. There are certainly some licks in there that gave me fits, like the beginning of the third movement. I think that's where, Frank being a bass trombonist, like "Oh, this'll be easy, it's just an E-flat." [sings opening to the third movement] But I had a heck of a time trying to figure out how to set for that stuff. And the way, for example, the way he wrote that, and the accents on it... [sings the accent pattern] And putting the accent on the G, [sings the next phrase] it was just a little awkward.

WHITFIELD: *When I talked to him about that, that was just something he was noodling around on bass trombone. His comment was "wow, if I can do this, then a real trombone player can really tear that up." So he said he'd been messing around with that motive for several weeks before he put it in the beginning of his third movement.*

VAUGHN: It's really cool, I like it.

WHITFIELD: *Yea. He also wrote the second movement first, as kind of a stand-alone recital piece. He said, as he was writing it, the third movement just happened because it felt like that second movement was going to lead directly into some big, technical, flurry of technique, or however he described it when we spoke. And then he said well this is clearly a second and third movement, so I have to write the first... And he actually said that there was some pressure on him to write a great first movement, because he didn't want the performer or the audience to check out and miss all the stuff he was really proud of. Then he finished and was pleased with all of it.*

VAUGHN: That's funny.

WHITFIELD: *You mentioned that a good high schooler could play it, you mentioned that it's a bit on the longer side. Where would you say that this piece fits into a recital program?*

VAUGHN: Well, you could structure a recital however you want. For me, I don't do more than a couple longer, more intense pieces, for concentration. So I would maybe finish a recital with this, or the end of a first half or something, or maybe start it. I don't know how you would balance your recital out... You want the audience to be able to follow along. Yea, if you did this, and then something else standard rep, like a Grondahl or something... it would be a lot. Then you could fill in your recital with these shorter, more interesting pieces, or more contrasting pieces I should say.

WHITFIELD: *So having given the premiere, does that have any influence on how you approach this particular piece, say, if you had a student playing it? And I know you gave the premiere in September, and then Covid happened in February, so there hasn't been much time to approach that with a student...*

VAUGHN: Yea, I think I only had one student check it out. I haven't had anyone perform it yet. But obviously a piece like this, that I spent a fair amount of time on, I know. I encourage my students to play things that I've spent time on, because I feel like I can bring so much more to them, because I've put the time in in deciding how to interpret it, and how best to pull off certain things. For example, this one is so much legato, so many big phrases, and it's a great teaching piece that way, too, making enough contrast between the legato and technical sections. And there are all kinds of ways that you can approach legato and really make that connection. For example, I think it's in the first movement. It's interesting to me that... I really like the first movement. There's a lot of time between the first and second movement. It's interesting that he wrote the second movement first and then felt like he had to... I dunno, that the first movement was more of an afterthought, I guess? I'm sure it's both. But it's surprising, because I think the first movement has a lot going for it, especially the melody in the middle [sings ascending sixth melody, m. 97] so that's one example of working on the legato. Whether to play the A in sixth, or choosing the right position. I ended up using sixth, go fifth to sixth position to really keep those connections smooth. Other spots, I would be less connected and smooth, and more passionate affected, if you will. So I guess, as a teacher, that's the kind of stuff I get into. This is a good vehicle, I would definitely encourage freshman-sophomores to work this piece up. They could do it on a studio recital, alone, it's a substantial piece and it fits right in with what we're working on in those early years in college.

WHITFIELD: *Could you walk me through your preparation for giving the premiere? Having no context for it at all, there were no recordings anywhere... Frank said the only time he'd heard it was a MIDI mockup that Finale did, and we all know how wonderful those are.*

VAUGHN: Yea. I think he may have sent me that, I can't remember now. Gosh, I have to go back in my notes... Yea, I mean, there's nothing too profound. Obviously, like I said, sitting down at the piano, playing chords, and singing it to myself, the things I do when I'm preparing anything. But it was exciting in that sense in that I haven't done a lot, and I haven't commissioned a lot of music, that's not something that I'm very used to – starting something that hasn't been done before, because I love to steal from other people [laughs] and what they've done. That being said, the writing in this is not so unfamiliar. I just worked up the Berio *Sequenza*, for example, for the second time. I did it once on a recital at Curtis, and the orchestra is doing this virtual, Philadelphia Orchestra, so I recorded it in my basement. It's coming out Wednesday, actually, so I'll link to it on my website. Anyway, that's CRAZY, a big difference. This is much more approachable because the music is generally very familiar, so I didn't feel like it was a big challenge, musically, to figure out where it was going.

WHITFIELD: *Right, the phrases are pretty obvious.*

VAUGHN: Yea, approachable. So, I mean, obviously, there were a couple spots like the beginning of the third movement, that took a little more effort, to just decide. And this is often the case, where I have a musical idea, but I can't necessarily technically pull it off, where Frank could, I'm sure, easily. But what you think is going to be easy for others may not be the case. And that's often the case, where I'll hear trombone players play something that I want to do what they do, but I just can't, for whatever reason, my embouchure isn't the same, so I have to make a different choice. So I don't always get to do what I musically want to do, but if I have to make a different choice, I'll make it musical, and I'll come up with some different musical that fits whatever physical thing I have to do to pull it off. So that, the beginning of the third movement is one example in particular. I just went back and listened to my recording of it, and I was like "ugh, that sucked." But I really wanted to have that [sings beginning of the third movement, emphasizing accent pattern], bringing out the accents. [the connection cuts out here for a second or two]...smooth, but I just couldn't quite pull that out, so I really just had to [sings differently, more bouncy] make it more rhythmic. [Connection cuts again]...deciding on the set. It's a long story, we don't have to get into it... You know, a piece like this, it'll be fun, I look forward to coming back to it again. Sometimes you have spots like that where you make due and figure out where you can, then put it away for a while then come back to it, and maybe I'll figure out a different way. It's always good to have space, sometimes, for a piece, and to do it more than once. So someday I'll do it again, maybe try that again. I'm just scanning through the piece to see if there are other spots that were tricky for me.

WHITFIELD: *One of the other people who has performed this is Sam Woodhead. He did it at Tennessee Tech back in February. I got a chance to speak with him, and he talked about two or three spots that were just tricky enough to warrant mention. There's a D-flat somewhere that sneaks up on you, and a couple of others. It was funny, the two or three spots he mentioned are the exact same places that I'm struggling with a bit now.*

VAUGHN: Yea, that's always the case with these pieces. Yea, it's in the second movement where you start out nice and [sings opening of second movement], and then it works [sings next part of phrase, to high D-flat]. Yea, actually, for me, the high stuff like that, isn't such a scary moment. In fact, I love that. For me the bigger challenge is choosing middle range legato and some of the technical things. And then also, I think, in particular, the first and second movements have a lot of similarity. There's a challenge, it's like, it can get a little monotonous to the listener, and I don't know that I necessarily did enough, trying to come up with enough variety that those two movements have some distinction.

WHITFIELD: *Ok, so what suggestions would you offer trombonists who are preparing the work for performance?*

VAUGHN: Hmm... Uh, I don't know. Suggestions, like suggestions on things to focus on, what do you mean?

WHITFIELD: *Yea, you mentioned a couple of times that you wanted to differentiate the first and second movements so that they didn't sound too similar.*

VAUGHN: Actually one thing that comes to mind, and I found myself, when I started working on this, and it's typical of longer pieces, to always start in the beginning. Like, because the beginning of the third movement is tricky, that often when I started practicing I would start on that third movement, and spend a lot of slow time, when I'm fresh and feeling good, working on the third movement. You might, I would do that too, I remember in the second movement, that high D-flat being a little risky, so some days I would start right there and just try to find the ease, find the easiest way to play that. And I think, also, I like to practice a piece like this really fast, to get a better picture of the overview of the piece. You could also, I didn't do this, but you could chart it out, what's happening in the three movements, like an analysis of sorts, Schenkerian or something. I had to do that in college, but I don't do it voluntarily.

WHITFIELD: *I might. I'm not sure yet, I've only started working on this in the last month. I picked these pieces at the beginning of the summer. Prior to switching to the DMA Project, my dissertation was going to be on the history of the American Trombone Workshop. I struggled with that, so I ultimately changed to the project route, and it's pretty much built itself. I'm really looking forward to the finished product.*

VAUGHN: Very good. I don't know if it would be worthwhile, but it might be worth it to analyze this piece. It wouldn't be terribly challenging to do. Did you talk to Frank much about that, the structure? I don't know how much he does that as a composer. Like "The Journey," what is the journey? What does that mean?

WHITFIELD: *We spoke a bit about it, from a very high altitude kind of overview. He never struggled with the title, he said from day one, when he knew it would be a three-movement work, he knew it would be titled "The Journey." He mentioned that, as he was writing it, everything, all the connective tissue between or across the movements was pretty organic. The only exception was that ascending sixth melody that comes up, verbatim, in both the first and third movements. So all that connective tissue, melodic and otherwise, just kind of fell onto the paper, as he put it.*

VAUGHN: Must be nice. [laughs]

WHITFIELD: *Yea. Do you have any other advice, closing thoughts that might benefit the project?*

VAUGHN: Yea, as I mentioned, you might want to get in touch with Dave Perkel. I really have no idea how much went between the two of them, or if Dave had any say... If Frank reached out to Dave, or Dave reached out to Frank.

WHITFIELD: *So Dave, I know, did his doctoral lecture recital on Frank at the time. They've been friends ever since, so I think that's how that came about and their relationship*

started. Frank had also mentioned to reach out to Dave, so I think I'll do that. I may also reach out to Randy Campora, as well. It's interesting that I picked these two pieces and there is so much connective tissue between the composers, it's too interesting not to explore.

VAUGHN: Yea, Randy's a super sweet guy, as well. He may have some funny stories about those guys.

WHITFIELD: *Yea. Well Matt, thank you so much for taking the time out of your day to chat with me, this has been super helpful.*

VAUGHN: If you want me to email you what I've written, I can forward you my written answers as well. I didn't get around to answering much, so you'll have to take some from this interview. But if you have any other questions, just email me. And stay safe down there!

WHITFIELD: *You as well.*

VAUGHN: Thanks.

END OF INTERVIEW

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW WITH SAM WOODHEAD, JULY 15, 2020

Note: Text in italics belongs to the interviewer (Whitfield), while the text without italics belongs to Sam Woodhead. Entire interview with Woodhead occurred via phone call on July 15, 2020. All correspondence and statements are copied as received.

WHITFIELD: *To give you a little background, I contacted you because you're the only person who has performed the Gulino [Sonata No. 1] since its premiere. In my project, I'm making sure I have all my bases covered in positing that this piece has the staying power of something like the Ewazen or the Šulek.*

WOODHEAD: Yea. That's a good place to start for me. The reason I picked this piece... well, there are many reasons, I guess. So yea, I had been asked by Dr. Hauser to come to Tennessee Tech to do his Trombone Day, and part of that was going to be doing a recital. So myself and Gabe Langfur split a recital. So I didn't need to do a full recital, but I did need to have something to play. I had been doing these every so often, I do one or two of these sort of trombone days a year. Sometimes they involve a full recital, and sometimes it's just, you know, one piece, or something. One thing I've noticed is that, you know, it's pretty tough on a soloist to come in, do one rehearsal, and do an entire recital. So picking your repertoire becomes really important, because it's one thing for you to be able to get through it with confidence, it's another thing for the pianist to do it, and then a third thing altogether to actually do that in a performance. I had tried this with other pieces like the Ewazen, and for me this was kind of like an option to the Ewazen, because it's a substantial piece. It's... I don't know how long it is. It's over fifteen minutes, right?

WHITFIELD: *Right.*

WOODHEAD: The problem with the Ewazen is that it's very sneaky, in that you can't get off. And I've had wonderful rehearsals with my accompanists, only to have them sabotage my performance. Not intentionally, obviously, but just like, they do something, and then, the next thing you know, it's like ugh... It's very treacherous in that way, that you can... the way it's written, you know, if you get off a little bit, your tanking a whole phrase.

I've known Frank as a composer and as a trombonist for many years now. I've certainly played pieces of his in trombone choir, and we've also had his music done at the [American] Trombone Workshop. I'm thinking... Brian Hecht did his bass trombone piece, I think. I think he did it with us. I don't know if that was the premiere or not. Was that? I'm trying to remember now, because it was originally done as a bass trombone piece, but there is a tenor version. And I'm confusing myself now, because Colin Wise has also done it with the Navy Band. I'm just confused as to, I'm not remembering. We did that piece, I just can't remember who was the soloist now. Brian has been with us a couple of times. So I know his [Frank's] writing, I know he writes really good music. And also, Matt Vaughn is somebody that I've been in contact with recently about coming to the Trombone

Workshop. And so when I saw him talking about this piece that he was doing with Frank, obviously I'd listened to the recording that he'd put up and really liked it. So I immediately reached out to Frank when I was thinking about repertoire for this trip. He's like yea, it's available on the website. So I immediately purchased it, and I had no idea that nobody else had done it! I kind of thought people would be jumping all over this. So I was really eager to work on it. And when I did actually really get to play it... What also struck me about it, and I don't know if Frank mentioned it, but I approached him about arranging it for band so that Matt could play it with the band at the Workshop, as a piece with band accompaniment.

WHITFIELD: *Oh great! Yea, no, he didn't say anything about that.*

WOODHEAD: That's something I kind of threw out there, and he was kindof like "oh, that's an interesting idea." Maybe that's a nice way of saying he didn't want to do it. [laughs]

WHITFIELD: *Did you talk to Matt Vaughn at all about the piece itself, or was it just that you heard him talking about it and listened to the recording?*

WOODHEAD: Yea, I mean, when I say I heard him talking about it, I saw his posts about it. I can't remember exactly what it was, but just knowing that he was giving the premiere, knowing that it was a piece by Frank, and then listening to the performance once he gave it. I think it's up on YouTube. That's all it took for me to get interested in the piece, and then want to play it. Yea, I didn't actually talk to him directly about it. I may have emailed him afterwards talking about doing this as a band piece also at the Workshop. But I haven't done anything for the Workshop since the last one, and obviously just given the way things are right now... All that stuff happened fairly soon and on top of each other, so I just haven't come back to it yet.

WHITFIELD: *Right. So how would you describe the merits of this piece, say, to a student?*

WOODHEAD: Um, well, it's a substantial piece of music in terms of duration. It's a full sonata, three movements. So, when you're looking at what you expect a college student to be able to do on a recital, you expect them to be able to play a substantial piece of music, and not just fill it with little five to six minute pieces and lots of rest... but to be able to sustain, not just endurance-wise, but also musically expressive wise, a much meatier, substantial piece of music. Especially, this has a lot of references from one movement to another, a lot of the themes call back. There's a lot to this piece, musically, that's going to require the student to be thinking ahead, and not just taking it one digestible bite at a time, but planning a full piece of music that way. As far as technique-wise, the piece offers a lot of challenges. What I do like about it is that it's not overly-range-y. It is approachable by a younger student. What's the highest note, a C, maybe? Yea, I don't remember there being any D's, anyway... I've got it right here. Oh wait, there is a D-flat. But again, that's just only a half-step higher. Also, something when you're thinking about a recital is that, there had been a trend that every piece had to have a high F in it or something, and it's like "come

on, guys.” For the most part, the piece lies right in the meat and potatoes range of the tenor trombone. So programming this is much easier, I think, than some other pieces, even like the Ewazen. Also, it’s not a unique piece. It’s not ground-breaking, or innovating, necessarily. It’s very much in a standard, set style. You know, it’s very much kind of like a very mid-Twentieth Century trombone sonata in a lot of ways. But it’s written really well. It has some really nice melodies, it’s got a lot of nice, beautiful moments, and really exciting moments. I think it’s just done better than a lot of other pieces that might have more precedence, and be more meaningful, historically. But in terms of actually playing the music, I’d rather play this than to try to put the Halsey Stevens *Sonata*, or the Saunders *Sonata* together.

WHITFIELD: *No kidding. It’s interesting that you should say that all the musical through-lines, movement to movement... In talking to Frank, most of that was organic. There was one theme in the first and third movements that he used deliberately, the ascending sixth melody. He also wrote the second and third movements before he wrote the first, and was so pleased with them that he put a lot of pressure on himself to write something in the first movement that listeners would remain engaged in, and not miss out on the work he was so proud of in the second and third. Ultimately, I just think it’s really well-written, and just done really well.*

WOODHEAD: Yea, I do too. It’s very interesting that he did write the second and third movements before the first, but I mean that makes total sense when you look at it. That melody that does come back in the third movement is really more of a foreshadowing than it is a callback. And that’s honestly one of my favorite moments in the piece, much more so in the third movement, actually, where it comes, than in the first movement.

WHITFIELD: *It’s a cool moment in the third movement when that comes back, your just like “ahh, this is familiar...” It brings the title “The Journey” full-circle. It’s really cool. So, we’ve kind of danced around it a bit, where does this piece, in your opinion, fit into a recital?*

WOODHEAD: You know, probably... This is the sort of piece that you build a recital around, I would say. Whether it be that you play a shorter piece at the beginning, and this is the main portion of the first half, like just a quick opener and then this, and that’s your first half. Or you program two to three short pieces on the first half, and this piece becomes the second half of the recital, again, followed by one or two shorter pieces on the second half. I think, when we did this at Tennessee, this was done kindof the same way. I think Gabe Langfur was playing a big piece, like a concerto, like a “Concerto for the World” or the “Earth Concerto,” I forget the exact title [*Continental Concerto* by Gregory Fritze] but it had something to do with that in there, so like each movement is a continent or something like that. It’s a big piece. And I want to say that... I also played the *Fantastic Polka* on that recital, too.

WHITFIELD: *I love that piece.*

WOODHEAD: Yea, it's a lot of fun. But I did that as like a closer. Ok, so I think we did something at the beginning. I think we played a trio, and then there may have been another short piece or two, and then I think this was like the big piece of the first half, and then I think Gabe did his big concerto as the big piece on the second half, and then I finished with the polka. Again, I'd have to check my recording with the time, but it's over fifteen minutes, it might be like sixteen or seventeen, right?

WHITFIELD: *I think, when I talked to Frank, he mentioned that if you observe all the tempo markings, the movements are almost exactly symmetrical at six minutes, so it's somewhere around eighteen minutes.*

WOODHEAD: Ok, yea, that sounds right. So, I mean, that's a fairly long piece. And, depending if you take ample water breaks in between, you know, you could stretch that to twenty minutes, walking on and off stage, applause, it's definitely a twenty minute time commitment I would say. And for most recitals, that's more than a half of the recital right there, right? Because you're probably only going to put like forty-five minutes of music on the entire recital, and that's still on the ambitious side, I would say. So yea, this is very much so, like, something you'd build a recital around.

WHITFIELD: *Agreed one hundred percent. Ok, how did you approach the challenges that this piece presents in preparing for your performance at Tennessee Tech?*

WOODHEAD: I'll have to say that I'm not usually one that listens to a lot of recordings when I prepare for things. I did listen to Matt's recording, and I love Matt's playing, and he's great, and maybe it was just the quality of the recording itself, but I tried to not play it exactly like he did. So I was kind of like OK, that's one way of doing it, but I did things a little differently. I feel like, you know, he's an orchestral trombone player, and his interpretation was very orchestral. Especially that first movement, like, it was really big. So I took a little bit more, just, soloistic approach to it, more of a, just, trombone and piano, not like me trying to compete with an orchestra or band for it. But honestly, I didn't really have a lot of technical issues or musical issues with playing it. It's really laid out well, the phrases are really clear. I'm not guessing at where the melody, you know, it's like everything is right there. Frank is really clear with his notation. For me, the trickiest technical issues are in the third movement, just, really just the opening, those leaps. So I had to work just to get those, especially the low E-flats, to really kind of sound the way that I wanted them to. And think that tempo at 144, I probably didn't go quite that fast. I don't know, I felt like when I put the metronome at 144, it just didn't quite work for me. And so, I don't remember, I'd have to listen to my recording to see what tempo I actually took.

WHITFIELD: *Frank actually came up with that opening lick in the third movement as just a slur that he was working on, and he was just noodling around on trombone and thought that it would be really cool to open something with, so that's where that came from. He working on it for three or four weeks to get to be able to play it, and then said "man, if I can play this, a 'real' trombone player could really nail it!"*

WOODHEAD: Yea, that's something I remember listening to Matt play, and I'm like man, he really nailed that. The other issue is really that dut-daga-dut dah dut-dah dut daga dah [mm. 15-16 in mvt. 3], I don't know why, but that slur in particular, going to that A-flat was just sneaky enough, and I don't know why. Maybe because it's a high A-flat, and it's not a great note on the trombone, but it's like every single time that gave me a little bit of trouble. That part sounds very much like the Goldstein *Colloquy*. I thought there was something else in the third movement that was kind of sneaky, and now I don't really see it. Oh, well, I mean there's just certain technical issues, like that thing in the second movement, right there, measure fourteen, up to the D-flat. That was just a little sneaky. But for the most part, you know, it lays really well on the trombone, and I could really just kind of sit down and play it, which is why I really liked it. I wanted something that would be relatively easy for me to put together with a pianist that I wasn't going to have to worry about too much. That was one thing that the pianist that I worked with, in particular, was impressed by: the fact that, you know, the piano part was actually really well-written. And knowing that the composer was a bass trombonist who had never studied composition, he was pretty amazed by that.

WHITFIELD: *That's awesome. You know, the stuff you're saying now is stuff that I'm struggling with when I look at the piece. Now I have a bit of a better idea, along the lines of writing a performer's guide, of the trouble spots that need some attention. Did you get a chance to talk to Frank at all about the piece, or play it for him, or did you just go do it at Tennessee Tech?*

WOODHEAD: Yea, I pretty much just did it at Tennessee Tech. Before I purchased it, I reached out to him and was like "hey, I saw you wrote this piece for Matt. Can I get a copy?" And he was like yea, and directed me to the website that was selling it. I told him what I was doing, that I'd be doing it at Tennessee Tech, so he knew I was going to be doing that. And then I believe I talked to him after. I don't know if I sent him a link to the recording or not, I should actually check to see if I did. I was pretty happy with how it went. It wasn't perfect by any means, but it went well. And I definitely talked to him about Matt doing it at the Workshop, and possibly having him (Frank) doing a version with band. We never got any further than that, but we did discuss that through email.

WHITFIELD: *Gotcha. What suggestions would you offer to trombonists who are preparing the work for performance?*

WOODHEAD: Hmm... Honestly, other than just have fun with it... There's a lot of really nice writing for the trombone, really pretty melodies. You know, what I like about it, too, there are opportunities, obviously, where the trombone has the melody, but then there are also parts where you are the obligato to the piano part. Like in that second movement, after you play the melody one time through, and then you start playing a lot of stuff to go [behind] the piano part. There are a lot of opportunities to collaborate with your accompanist. I found that really nice in just the way that Frank wrote that.

WHITFIELD: *But not in a way that's going to trip you up. It's just very accessible.*

WOODHEAD: Yea, it's very easy for the pianist to know what's going on and where things are, too.

WHITFIELD: *Side-note, is that recording out somewhere, or something you'd mind sharing?*

WOODHEAD: Yea, I'm pulling up my email right now. I'm trying to see if I have the correspondence with Frank here. There's the one with me telling him what I was going to do. Sorry, I'm just looking on my phone here. That's the problem with things right now, I have things in too many places. [laughter] You know, it's interesting, I don't see where I had that conversation with Frank, maybe it's because it was in-person. It may have been at the Workshop itself, that's very possible. That may be why I don't have it in my email. Let me see about the recording here, that would have been from Josh. If it's still in this dropbox, I'll send it to you.

WHITFIELD: *If not, I can reach out to Dr. Hauser, I'm sure he's got it somewhere.*

WOODHEAD: Yea, and if he needs me to approve it, I'd be happy to do that. The problem is that I have a bunch of emails from Josh, he's very thorough. Ok, so Gabe was doing the *Continental Concerto*. Alright, so I was wrong. The program was that, we did a Michael Davis trio, then Gabe did the *Continental Concerto*, then I did the *Sonata*, and then there were a couple short pieces. There it is. I have the link here, so I'll forward it to you.

WHITFIELD: *Awesome, I think we've been through all my questions. Do you have any other thoughts or closing ideas on the Gulino?*

WOODHEAD: No, I mean, I certainly hope that more people play it. I was very surprised that I'm the only other person besides Matt Vaughn to do it. John Swallow used to have this saying about some pieces. He'd play pieces sometimes because he thought that they were important and substantial pieces, but not because he thought they were great pieces of music. You know, that can be true, and I think as educators they need to put forth pieces that are 'important,' but as far as, like, as a soloist and something I want to play, this piece is great. Like I said, it may not be groundbreaking, it may not be terribly innovative, but it's just so well-written. In some ways it's like, and this is going to sound disparaging and I don't mean it that way, but it's like a Disney movie. It might be really cheesy and very conventional, but he did such a great job with it that you come away just feeling really good after playing it. And people like to listen to it, so yea, that's where I come down on it. It's just really well-executed and written. But just a really great piece of standard music.

WHITFIELD: *That's outstanding. Sam, thank you so much for taking the time to talk to me, this has been immensely helpful!*

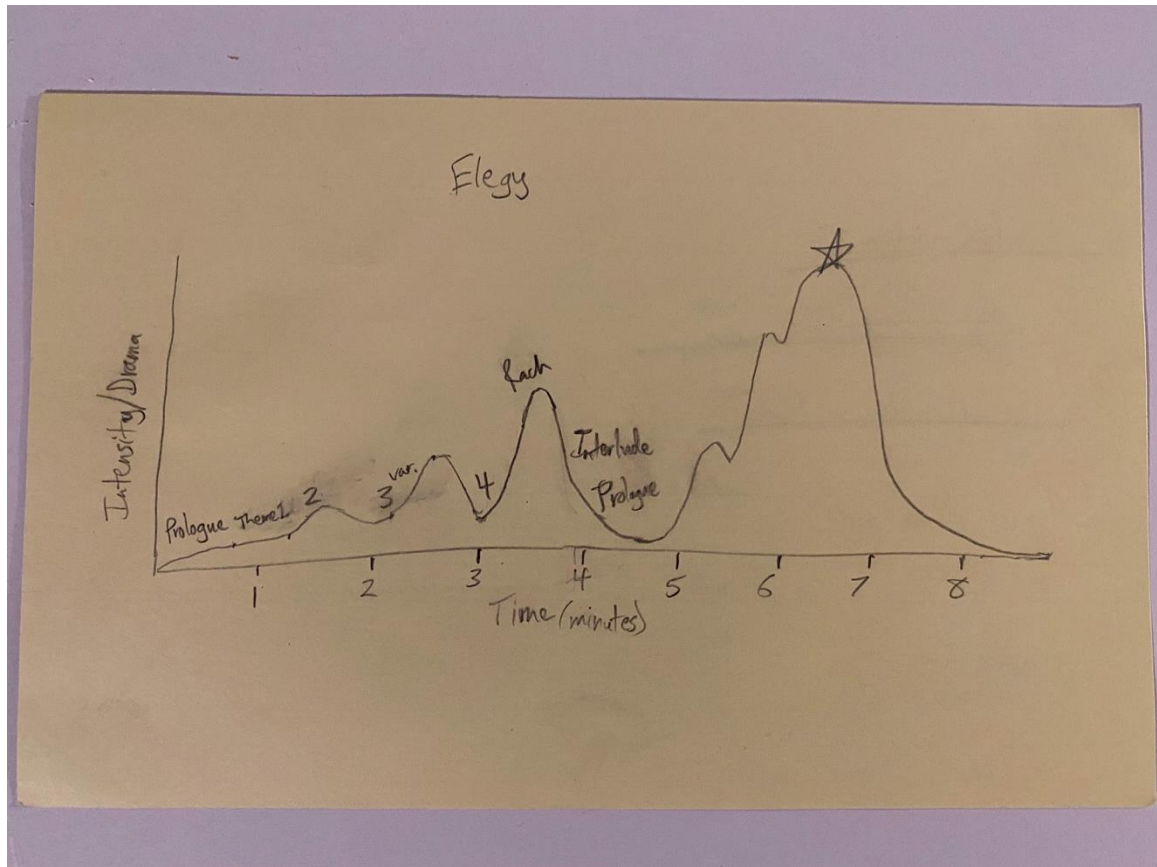
WOODHEAD: Yea, I'm happy to. I'll make sure to forward that link to you, I'll try to do that today.

WHITFIELD: *Awesome, thank you so much.*

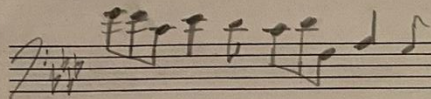
WOODHEAD: Sure thing, Mark. Take care, good luck!

END OF INTERVIEW

APPENDIX G - BUONO'S NOTES ON ELEGY FOR TROMBONE AND PIANO



Elegy



Sturm und Drang, the Epilogue/
Epitaph

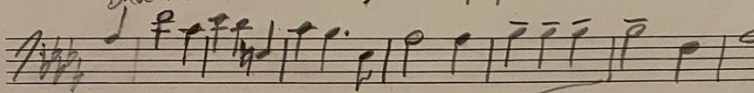
Gather content that feels and sounds really good to play on trombone.
so great

Write this piece as a trombonist, for trombonists. Make it very satisfying to play
Put yourself in Cory's shoes. What's he going to LOVE to play? on trombone.

End with the "Sanctus," as an Epitaph

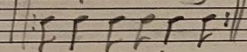
Think Brahms "Four Serious Songs"

Make it an art song

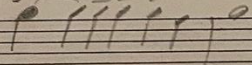


Vocal reperture,
write it for Thomas
Quasthoff

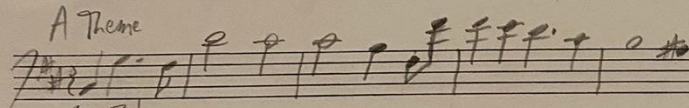
Accompaniment Rhythm



Opening? Also coda

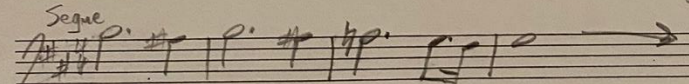


A Theme



Bass 8vb

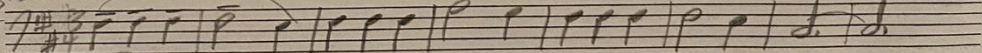
Segue



5. line
Descent to D major

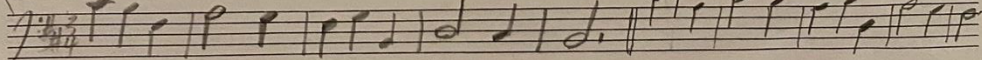
Parallel
rhythms!

B Theme



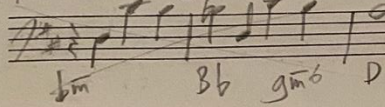
8va for tenor

C Theme Minor



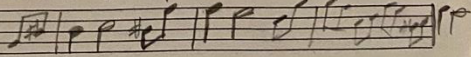
C Theme Major

(optional) Profound Ending, (Coda) Save this for something else



bm Bb gm6 D

Sober ending, transpose to B minor?

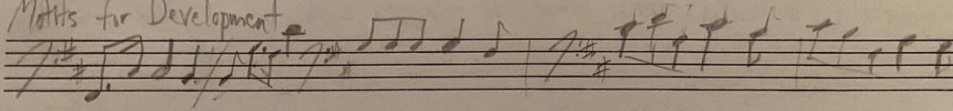


Design/Trajectory

opening → A Theme → Segue down → B Theme → Sturm und Drang Development →
Using A, B, but first C Themes
B Theme speeds up, gets distorted

→ Climax C Theme → Shosty → Epilogue → same A Theme → Closing (opening)
Same A Theme

Motifs for Development



APPENDIX H

IRB APPROVAL LETTER

Office of
Research Integrity



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NOTICE OF INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD ACTION

The project below has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services regulations (45 CFR Part 46), and University Policy to ensure:

- The risks to subjects are minimized and reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered involving risks to subjects must be reported immediately. Problems should be reported to ORI via the Incident template on Cayuse IRB.
- The period of approval is twelve months. An application for renewal must be submitted for projects exceeding twelve months.
- FACE-TO-FACE DATA COLLECTION WILL NOT COMMENCE UNTIL USM'S IRB MODIFIES THE DIRECTIVE TO HALT NON-ESSENTIAL (NO DIRECT BENEFIT TO PARTICIPANTS) RESEARCH.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: IRB-20-300

PROJECT TITLE: Discovering Two New Solo Works for Trombone: A Performance Guide to the History, Analysis, and Preparation of Frank Gulino's Sonata No. 1: The Journey, and Joseph Buono's Elegy for Trombone and Piano

SCHOOL/PROGRAM: School of Music, Music

RESEARCHER(S): John Whitfield, William McIlwain

IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Approved

CATEGORY: Expedited

7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

PERIOD OF APPROVAL: July 6, 2020

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donald Sacco".

Donald Sacco, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board Chairperson

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