

PHILOSOPHICAL IMPLICATIONS ON TROMBONE PERFORMANCE AND PEDAGOGY  
IN ANDRE LAFOSSE'S CURRICULUM AT THE PARIS CONSERVATORY

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During his tenure as the professor of trombone at the Paris Conservatory, Andre Lafosse wrote the *Traite de Pedagogie du Trombone a Coulisse* addressing trombone pedagogy that was to be studied in conjunction with his method and etude books, *Method Complete de Trombone* and *Vade Mecum du Tromboniste*. The pedagogic philosophy reflects Lafosse's own experiences as an orchestral musician in France in the early 20th-century. Lafosse designed and used his treatise to prepare students to be effective teachers after their graduation from the Conservatory. The scope of preparation for Lafosse's trombone class, however, was limited. He did not attempt to provide a text or tutor that would prepare trombonists for any career in music: Lafosse was primarily concerned with orchestral trombone playing, as reflected in musical exercises, instrument designation, and repertoire references. Solo performance skills are also explained at length in his treatise, and Lafosse includes his own solo transcriptions in the curriculum. This emphasis placed on performing as a soloist appears to oppose Lafosse's implied preference for orchestral performance.

Throughout his career as a trombone professor Andre Lafosse compiled and wrote music that emphasized elements of trombone technique based on the French solo and orchestral repertoire. His primary concern as a teacher was developing the skills for an orchestral career in France, but his method was to use exercises that focused on certain

technical aspects of trombone performance. The exercises and etudes chosen were all influenced by French music regarding the skills deemed important by Lafosse (i.e. those required by the French orchestral and solo repertoire) and the acoustic design of the trombone in France in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Considering the holistic context of Lafosse's role at the Paris Conservatory, Lafosse's curriculum and methodology should be deemed appropriately designed for the best interest of the students.

In the following pages the implications of Lafosse's philosophy will be explored in order to understand the basis for his ideas, and his pedagogic approach will be evaluated in the context of the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. The purpose of these endeavors is to discover Lafosse's reasoning and its appropriateness within a synchronic context.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

During his tenure as the professor of trombone at the Paris Conservatory, Andre Lafosse wrote the *Traite de Pedagogie du Trombone a Coulisse* addressing trombone pedagogy that was to be studied in conjunction with his method and etude books, *Method Complete de Trombone* and *Vade Mecum du Tromboniste*.<sup>1</sup> The pedagogic philosophy reflects his own experiences as an orchestral musician in France in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Lafosse designed and used his treatise to prepare students to be effective teachers after their graduation from the Conservatory. The scope of preparation for Lafosse's trombone class, however, was limited. Lafosse did not attempt to provide a text or tutor that would prepare trombonists for any career in music: he was primarily concerned with orchestral trombone playing, as reflected in his musical exercises, instrument designation, and repertoire references. Solo performance skills are also explained at length in his treatise, and Lafosse includes his own solo transcriptions in the curriculum. This emphasis placed on performing as a soloist appears to oppose his implied preference for orchestral performance.

In the following pages the implications of Lafosse's philosophy will be explored in order to understand the basis for his ideas, and his pedagogic approach will be evaluated in the context of the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. The purpose of these endeavors is to discover Lafosse's reasoning and

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<sup>1</sup>The *Method* was written in 1921 and later published in three volumes in 1946. The *Traite* followed in 1955 and the *Vade Mecum* in 1956.

its appropriateness within a synchronic context.

Lafosse has received written professional acclaim because of his arrangements and transcriptions, but his treatise on pedagogy has been given only nominal specific attention. Many professional trombone scholars have explored the general history of the Paris Conservatory and the impact of its trombone professors on trombone pedagogy. The current leading authority on the trombone in France is Paris-based historian and critic Raymond Lapie. He has written several articles on French trombone repertoire from the 19<sup>th</sup> century and has compiled thorough bibliographies of French music for trombone. Howard Weiner has also researched and documented early French instructional exercises and etudes for trombone. Although little attention is given to Lafosse's treatise or his method, Weiner's research outlines the foundation of the entire pedagogical legacy of the Paris Conservatory.

Two research projects from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century have examined French pedagogy. In 1971 a problem in lieu of thesis was written by Robert M. Jackson entitled *Analysis of Selected Trombone Methods Developed at the Paris Conservatory of Music*. This text superficially examines the tutors of Lafosse and most of his predecessors, but contains the negligent omission of Louis Allard, whose influence extends to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Jackson provides a valuable bibliography of primary sources relating to early 20<sup>th</sup> century French trombone music that includes Lafosse's treatise and method book.<sup>2</sup> Jeffrey Jon Lemke's doctoral thesis, *French Tenor Trombone Solo Literature and Pedagogy Since 1836*, further analyzes the instructional techniques of Lafosse and other French pedagogues. Although Lemke acknowledges the value of Lafosse's curriculum and his contribution to trombone pedagogy, the *Traite de Pedagogie du*

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<sup>2</sup>Robert Jackson, "Analysis of selected trombone methods developed at the Paris Conservatory of Music" (M.M. thesis, North Texas State University, 1971), 54.

*Trombone a Coulisse* is only topically over viewed and Lafosse's pedagogic perspectives remain unnoted.

Published research on Lafosse's individual contributions to trombone pedagogy does not exist, warranting this exegesis. Modern trombone authors have overlooked the longevity and influence of Lafosse's philosophy on trombone teaching because of the shadow cast by his transcriptions and performances. Although his major posts as a performer are significant historically and influenced his ideas on teaching, the philosophical aspect of his work has not been valued to an equal degree. As a result of this negligence other written tutors are often favored, and Lafosse's treatise does not receive the breadth of readership it deserves. Authors have also failed to trace the emergence of modern French and American pedagogy from late 19<sup>th</sup> century French solo literature.

To support this synchronic research a sectionalized bibliography has been compiled, providing a context for understanding Lafosse's instructional philosophies, exercises, and literature selections. Resources that provide background information on the usage of the trombone are also appended; both within and outside of France in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. This will clarify the relationship between the physical differences of early 20<sup>th</sup> century trombones, the music written for each of them, and the manner of teaching followed in different regions.

## CHAPTER II

### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PARIS CONSERVATORY IN FRENCH TROMBONE PEDAGOGY

Since the 1790s the *Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris* (hereafter called the Paris Conservatory) has provided musical training for students to prepare for service in French ensembles. The Conservatory is responsible for many great contributions to trombone literature, stemming from the annual *concours*, or contest, for which a new piece of music was commissioned each year. In 1842 Antoine-Guillaume Dieppo served as the trombone professor and began the tradition of selecting one piece with which all trombonists would compete, and in 1897 it became a standard practice that the annual contest piece should be a new commission for the solo repertoire.<sup>3</sup> This tradition has generated a vast body of solo literature encompassing every instrument available for study at the Conservatory.

Lafosse's philosophy on trombone instruction is shaped by the legacy of trombone professors at the Paris Conservatory with only nominal outside influence. His entire curriculum consists primarily of exercises, solos, and orchestral repertoire written by French composers and teachers, many of whom were affiliated with the Paris Conservatory before the year 1960.<sup>4</sup> This provided a consistency across generations of French trombonists and prepared them well for careers in French regions, but no instruction on traditional non-French trombone practices appear

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<sup>3</sup> Constant Pierre, *Le Conservatoire National de Musique et de Déclamation; Documents Historiques et Administratifs Recueillis ou Reconstitués Par Constant Pierre* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1900), 652.



anywhere in Lafosses's treatise. Even within specific instructional lessons Lafosse cites previous trombone professors of the Paris Conservatory. In his section on sound quality and ornamentation, Lafosse refers to the exercises written by Louis Allard and Henri Couillaud rather than incorporating examples from the trombone repertoire or citing non-French pedagogues. This furthered the performance practices of the Conservatory for another generation of trombonists and prevented a cross-cultural influence on France from other countries.

In Lafosse's position at the Paris Conservatory it was common to limit the scope of orchestral excerpt instruction to music performed by the major French opera orchestras and symphonies.<sup>5</sup> Felix Vobaron's etudes were designed to prepare students for military band music, and Antoine-Guillaume Dieppo intended to prepare his class for orchestral careers with his exercises.<sup>6</sup> It is out of this tradition at the Paris Conservatory that Lafosse chose initially to create his method—and subsequently his treatise—to guide his students down the path of his choosing. Pedagogically, Lafosse does not specify the context in which the exercises found in his method should be performed, but it is clear that his professional goal for his students was to become an orchestral trombonist. When considering the range of his instructional exercises and the opening and closing remarks of his treatise, it may be concluded that Lafosse considers orchestral performance to be the highest calling of any trombonist. In a footnote of chapter 22 he mentions the intent of the Paris Conservatory to be the training of orchestral musicians and

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<sup>4</sup> Lafosse died in 1960. See Figure 1 for a list of his curriculum.

<sup>5</sup> Lafosse, Allard, Couillaud, Delisses and Dieppo all held positions in major French opera orchestras and succeeded each other at the Conservatory's *Societe des Concerts du Conservatory*.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Jackson, "Analysis of selected trombone methods developed at the Paris Conservatory of Music" (M.M. thesis, North Texas State University, 1971), 36.

that the *Societe des Concerts du Conservatory* allowed students to play alongside their professors in an orchestral setting.<sup>7</sup> It was assumed that students accepted into the Conservatory would one day audition for these ensembles and maintain the Parisian tradition within the orchestra if they were able to qualify for the contest in the fields of solfege, musical analysis, and sight-reading. These are the skills that were instated by the Paris Conservatory over a period of 150 years, and they represent the qualities they find most valuable in a performer. Students who won the *Premier Prix* could expect a full career in performing.<sup>8</sup> For individual technical exercises professors had traditionally created curricula based on their own intentions for the Conservatory trombone class.

Although his primary source of pedagogic materials is French teachers and composers, Lafosse does not completely exclude non-French composers from his curriculum. Several duets by J.S. Bach and W.A. Mozart are included in his *Method*, and the *Vade Mecum* contains transcriptions of works by Schubert, Tartini, Vivaldi, and J.S. Bach. Orchestral excerpts are drawn from the masterworks and major composers like J.S. Bach, Wagner, Stravinsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Verdi, Richard Strauss, Prokoffief, W.A. Mozart, and Moussorgsky, but an equal number of French orchestral passages appear, as Lafosse cites Debussy, Ravel, Samuel-Rousseau, Delibes, Faure, Saint-Saëns, Ibert, Franck, and Berlioz. The solos included in the *Traite du Pedagogie* were written exclusively by French composers, and Lafosse wrote studies based on several of them, but no solo literature from other countries are present. Lafosse's intent may not have been to focus solely on the French repertoire—although it is favored heavily—he

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<sup>7</sup> Andre Lafosse, *Traite de Pedagogie du Trombone a Coulisse* (Paris: Alphonse Leduc, 1955), 52.

<sup>8</sup> According to Dr. J. Mark Thompson (interview).

maintains a standard of high-quality music regardless of its national affiliation. His choices of repertoire are very practical for the students attending the Conservatory: French solo literature, major orchestral works (including French composers), and pedagogic selections from major composers transcribed for trombone.

In early 20<sup>th</sup> century France it was difficult for students to receive private instruction unless they entered a conservatory. This placed teachers like Lafosse in a precarious situation wherein the students that entered his studio had possibly received no individual instruction on the trombone, but had performed on the instrument for several years in local ensembles. There were two major considerations that must have been made while Lafosse designed his treatise: the students lacked extensive solo performance, and they had developed bad habits during their secondary school years. Focusing on the solo repertoire with such students provided a means of addressing any general problems a student possessed while also gaining familiarity with the French solo repertoire and its performance techniques.

One conclusion to ascertain is the similarity between French orchestral repertoire and French solo literature. This exists because of the soloistic nature of the trombone in music of the Impressionist period, and because trombone instructors at the Paris Conservatory intended to prepare their students for the orchestral repertoire by writing solos utilizing the same skills to a more challenging degree. Lafosse's treatise, method, and additional curricular studies focus on solo playing in order to best prepare students for a professional career in France as an orchestral musician. The fundamental explanations of his treatise provided Lafosse a means of fulfilling any basic deficiencies in a student's playing while simultaneously preparing him or her for the future responsibility of teaching assumed by all professional orchestral musicians. One might

refer to Lafosse’s approach to trombone pedagogy as being “orchestrally-rooted, but solo-oriented.” This philosophy was thoroughly considered, implemented, and tried over the span of more than 40 years. Lafosse’s techniques—along with the curriculum of previous trombone professors at the Paris Conservatory—are designed so well that they have influenced by brass pedagogues globally.

## CHAPTER III

### LAFOSSE'S PEDAGOGY AND CURRICULUM

Lafosse's own statements exalting the orchestra as the ultimate performing venue for trombonists lead one to believe that his technical exercises and etudes all exist to prepare players for orchestral careers. This philosophy makes excellent sense when the context of Lafosse's life is considered. Before 1950 there were no French trombonists who made a living solely from solo performances: the only full-time employment opportunity was performing in ensembles. French performers were more limited than some other countries (such as the United States, who had jazz performing opportunities) because of the strong orchestral presence. Lafosse's emphasis on orchestral music should, therefore, be considered rightly placed. Furthermore, his orchestral instruction also shows the importance he places on career application in Lafosse's teaching. Amateur players would not be studying at the Conservatory, and they would not be expected to limit their performing styles to orchestral. Lafosse's teaching was designed for professional-bound, career musicians, which is exactly the type of students he admitted into his trombone class.

The etudes written by Lafosse are designed to increase a player's ability to maneuver the upper tessitura and complicated rhythmic or metric schemes, both of which are essential to accurately performing the French orchestral and solo repertoire. There are no exercises for tenor trombone that use the lower register of the instrument to a great extent, which is primarily

because of the absence of the bass trombone in French orchestras before 1950, but also due to composers' preferences for the upper register of the trombone. Lafosse's instructions on how different accents should be performed also represent an orchestral interpretation of the markings. The author explains that the accent on its side (>) indicates a strong attack and an immediate diminuendo, whereas the vertical accent (^) indicates no diminuendo.<sup>9</sup> These definitions point the student toward unifying the articulation in his or her playing, which is a higher priority for orchestral performers than for solo, non-classical or chamber performers. Lafosse also provides no clarification for different tessituras or musical styles that one encounters in solo music, further supporting his intent to train orchestral performers.

The solo literature addressed by Lafosse reveals the type of instrument for which French composers were writing. The agility demanded by French solos by such composers as Eugene Bozza, Henri Couillaud, and Joseph Edouard Barat are the reason for Lafosse's abundant technical exercises in his method. The ornamentation demanded by the French solo style was well-suited to the small bore of the French trombone. The tone quality of a larger American or German instrument would not have been as light as the smaller French design. The cone-shaped mouthpiece also made the execution of such ornamentations as the trill, the turn, and the gruppetto much easier.

By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century French composers were exploiting these natural capabilities of the trombone. Bozza's *Ballade* was written for a trombonist with an excellent high register who was adept in counting complex rhythms. Barat's *Andante et Allegro* demands vocal nuances and stylings that go beyond the requirements of the orchestral repertoire. These are all skills one

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<sup>9</sup> Andre Lafosse, *Traite du Trombone a Coulisse* (Paris: Alphonse Leduc, 1955), 28.

would have acquired at the Paris Conservatory while studying with Lafosse, and they are skills that appear to be based on preparation for the solo—rather than the orchestral—repertoire.

Lafosse taught from a compilation of etudes that are mentioned in his treatise, and several of the tutors used by Lafosse, including his own, are found in French and non-French teaching studios today.<sup>10</sup> To modern teachers outside of France these method books represent the French solo repertoire and fundamental studies aimed at preparing trombonists for its performance. The young age of private students in present society is one reason that a broader span of method books for a teacher's curriculum is necessary, but the general attitude toward performance in the present school of pedagogy is one of open-mindedness to all musical interpretations and styles. The primary difference in the usage of Lafosse's curriculum by himself and its usage by the other modern pedagogues outside of France is that today it exists as one component of a student's study rather than the entire canon of literature. Modern educators also teach their students how to perform orchestral excerpts and solos appropriately based on the music's region and era of composition, whereas Lafosse's pedagogy indicates no such distinctions in performance practice.

A large amount of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century French solo trombone repertoire mentioned in Lafosse's treatise is found in transcriptions. Several trombone professors at the Paris Conservatory are responsible for proving the value of transcribing works for the trombone. The work of Louis Allard in transcribing the vocalises of Marco and Willent Bordogni provided much-needed elements of the repertoire to reflect the lyrical character of the instrument. Lafosse also assisted Allard with the transcription and publication of Arban's exercises in 1946. These

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<sup>10</sup> See Figure 2.

two books that originated from the Paris Conservatory trombone faculty now serve as major resources for trombone pedagogy across the globe.

Paul Delisse had established the Conservatory precedent for transcribing pieces for trombone in the 1870s with works by J.S. Bach, W.A. Mozart, F.J. Haydn, and Ludwig van Beethoven. In this tradition Lafosse transcribed and edited several solo works for the trombone, including three pieces by Giuseppe Tartini, Franz Schubert and Antonio Vivaldi, George F. Handel's *Concerto for Oboe and String Orchestra in G minor*<sup>11</sup>, and selections from J.S. Bach's *Six Suites for Violoncello*. Each of these solos goes beyond the orchestral demands of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century French trombone repertoire, but the qualities required for performance remain the same for transcriptions and orchestral music. The original works that were transcribed, however, are all of a solo nature, again demonstrating that the impetus for Lafosse's actions was individual study even though his stated and implied priority was orchestral performance.

These solo pieces for trombone all contributed to the development of the lyrical potential of the instrument, and this lyrical nature brought out by Lafosse and his predecessors has been further developed by major 20<sup>th</sup> century trombone pedagogues. Although Lafosse did not specifically approach the trombone as one's voice, his belief in the value of imitation in the learning process and the aural development of a student reflect the vocal nature of his pedagogic philosophy. Lafosse considered a musician's ability to mentally hear the desired pitches to be his or her most valuable asset, which directly correlates with the Paris Conservatory's priorities based on the prerequisites for the annual solo contest. Lafosse's instructions on articulation require the player to recall from memory and imitate the sound of a piano being struck for simple *detache* lines, and the aim of many exercises in his treatise is to train the student to hear written



pitches mentally. Lafosse further encourages students in his treatise to listen to radio broadcasts to learn proper execution in matters of style, clearly demonstrating the imitation model for learning.

The chapter on tablature in Lafosse's treatise actually focuses primarily on hitting the correct partials. Lafosse states that the starting pitch must be heard mentally before one attempts to play it, however he offers only limited pedagogic aids for students to practice hearing pitches mentally. He presents diagrams and explanations of common problems, but few exercises are provided to help trombonists overcome such hindrances to their playing. This element of pedagogy may have been intentionally omitted because of Lafosse's intended readership. His stated audience was the trombone studio of the Paris Conservatory, and the intent of Lafosse's treatise was to prepare them to be trombone teachers.<sup>12</sup> The omission of auditory training from Lafosse's treatise limits the scope of what his students would be prepared to teach. Lafosse declares that one must understand solfege and have the ability to hear pitches mentally before he or she should attempt to play the trombone,<sup>13</sup> which increases the minimum age of trombone study. Teaching at the Conservatory Lafosse concerned himself primarily with the maximum age, but considered age 15 to 20 as "young."<sup>14</sup> This philosophy that only includes students over the age of approximately 15 was a French tradition, and the value of learning at a young age was outweighed by the French prerequisite of internal audiation for trombone study.

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<sup>11</sup> All of which are found in Lafosse's *Vade Mecum du Tromboniste*.

<sup>12</sup> Andre Lafosse, *Traite du Trombone a Coulisse* (Paris: Alphonse Leduc, 1955), 6.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>14</sup> Students over the age of 23 were not accepted into the trombone class at the Conservatory. Andre Lafosse, *Traite de Pedagogie du Trombone a Coulisse* (Paris: Alphonse Leduc, 1955), 21.

## CHAPTER IV

### LAFOSSE'S EMPHASES REGARDING TROMBONE TECHNIQUE

Lafosse's treatise would suit an inexperienced player because of its progressive organization. He explains each aspect of trombone playing in great detail to ensure that students of all proficiency levels can understand them. It could be inferred from his excessively pedantic instructions that during his previous years at the Conservatory Lafosse encountered students who lacked the fundamental knowledge of proper trombone performance skills. The focus of Lafosse's predecessors rested mostly on the execution of specific musical passages, leaving a void for Lafosse to fill with what he considered to be "the only complete cycle of studies" for the trombone at the time.<sup>15</sup> Lafosse saw the need for an all-inclusive pedagogy manual and created the treatise to provide the solution.

The nominal supply of orchestral excerpts from Lafosse's treatise and method exists partly because of the ample collection of them left by his predecessors, but it also seems that he preferred to use a combination of the solo repertoire and exercises for general instructional purposes. Considering that the French solo and orchestral repertoire require the same skills and that the solo repertoire has a higher level of difficulty, this choice to focus on the solo literature appears to be appropriate. Lafosse's attention was directed specifically to the technical elements required for performing the repertoire, rather than the literature itself. The demands of the

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<sup>15</sup> Andre Lafosse, *Vade Mecum du Tromboniste* (Paris: Alphonse Leduc, 1946), VII.

French repertoire served as the impetus for his technical studies, but Lafosse concentrated on accurately executing the particular skills as he designed his curriculum.

Lafosse's treatise explains how to execute glissandi because the prominent impressionistic composers called upon this effect frequently—often several times within a single movement. The famous trombone solo from Maurice Ravel's *Bolero* contains pure glissandi, which require the use of alternate positions in the upper tessitura playable on a single partial.<sup>16</sup> Darius Milhaud's *La Creation du Monde* includes glissandi that are not acoustically possible on the trombone, creating a dilemma for the trombonist to overcome. This may be part of Lafosse's reason for explaining at length how to create an artificial glissando by crossing harmonics upwards. He provides written examples showing which notes and positions can be played to create a smooth glissando across several partials. This technique emerged out of necessity due to the French orchestral repertoire, and has become part of the French tradition of smooth trombone articulation.

Other skills developed by Lafosse's method include alternating between tenor and bass clefs quickly, increasing comfort level with alternate positions, and the ability to execute wide leaps. These skills will not only help students prepare for solo performing, they are also demanded in the orchestral repertoire that was commonly performed in France before and during Lafosse's tenure at the Conservatory.<sup>17</sup> Milhaud's *La Creation du Monde* contains wide leaps and frequent clef changes. *Nocturnes* by Claude Debussy necessitates the use of several alternate positions to maneuver the complicated rhythms in the upper register. However, a weak

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<sup>16</sup> Lafosse premiered the *Bolero* trombone solo in January of 1930 under the direction of Maurice Ravel.

<sup>17</sup> A series of recordings was made by the *Société des Concerts du Conservatory* between February 1930 and October 1935 consisting of virtually the entire Impressionist repertoire.

point in Lafosse's examples in this section on alternate positions is that the position designations in his exercises are not determined by slide patterns. He includes them as a means of practicing their application in any conceivable context, which seems to lack a logical or philosophical foundation. Had he drawn the musical examples from the orchestral or solo repertoire a practical application would exist and the exercises might serve their purpose more effectively. This leads one to believe that Lafosse did not create these exercises with the French orchestral repertoire in mind, rather he was preparing students to develop specific technical skills on the trombone.

In the chapter addressing style in his method, Lafosse focuses on technical issues on the trombone that are important to performing the French solo repertoire. His comments on the use of vibrato provide valuable insight into French performance practice. He deems it "vulgar" and declares that it should be avoided when performing the classic repertoire.<sup>18</sup> This reveals Lafosse's respect for the trombone's purity of tone and his opinion that producing a characteristic tone quality should be a performer's main priority. The disdain for vibrato seems unusual considering the number of transcriptions found in the French solo trombone repertoire that were originally written for instruments that use vibrato, such as the cello, violin, oboe, and voice. Lafosse's approach seems to begin with the technical aspects of the trombone rather than the music itself.

His comments on phrasing, however, emphasize the importance of breath control, and that the musical phrase is more important than the physical limitations of one's lung capacity. Although he approaches music from the technical perspective of a trombonist, this aspect of his pedagogy shows Lafosse's emphasis on musicianship in performance. It may be concluded that Lafosse believes that physical elements of trombone playing are the means by which one creates

a stylized interpretation with musical meaning.

Eugene Bigot's *Impromptu pour Trombone* was dedicated to Lafosse in 1927, and subsequently served as the Paris Conservatory contest piece in 1931, 1943, 1974, and 1982. The piece contains many traditional elements of French trombone solo literature, and Lafosse considered it such an important part of the repertoire that he composed a study piece designed to prepare students for performing it. The etude is less technically challenging than the actual solo, but contains the same structural elements: time signatures, key signatures, tempi, styles, rhythms, and motifs. The melodies are also the same for short periods, but they are often down an octave from the original. This is not only important for making the solo technically accessible to less experienced players, but it also incorporates aural training into Lafosse's pedagogy in a practical way. He states how important aural development is in his treatise and lists methods of pursuing it, and although he doesn't specifically mention the performing of a solo down an octave to aurally learn the melody, it is a valid technique and Lafosse practiced it in his teaching.

Orchestral excerpts are a significant part of the training at the Paris Conservatory, and Volume II of Lafosse's method contains several passages and studies focusing on them. Lafosse considered Hector Berlioz an important composer regarding orchestral trombone music: he discusses *Hungarian March* in his treatise, he includes the trombone excerpts in his method book, and he composed a study (also found in his method) on the same excerpt. Lafosse approaches the Berlioz excerpt with the same principle as the Bigot solo, but the "Study on the 'Hungarian March of Faust's Damnation'" is much longer than the original excerpt and contains additional demanding measures. A few of the passages are identical or down an octave from the original, but several contain wide leaps and long scalar runs, increasing the difficulty level of the

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<sup>18</sup> *Method*, 174.

etude. The study piece does provide several didactic elements, including isolation of rhythmic figures, octave displacement for aural learning, and repetition of motivic material. These elements all assist players in mastering the necessary skills for performing the orchestral passages, and again Lafosse uses his own writing ability to develop trombone technique in his students for the purpose of orchestral preparation.

Even though outside of France there were various uses of the tenor and bass trombone, Lafosse only considered the instruments from a French point of view in his teaching. This limitation was very practical in nature and determined for the best interest of his students, who were not all mature enough as musicians to handle multiple interpretations of musical style and who were most likely going to perform in French ensembles.

Of specific note in Lafosse's treatise and method is the insignificant role of the bass trombone. When writing his curriculum Lafosse did not consider the bass trombone from a non-French perspective. The bass trombone in France has historically lacked an identity that composers considered useful, so the music written for trombone sections failed to develop an independent voice for the bass trombone. The separation between bass and tenor trombonist in an orchestral section was minor because the entire section typically played on tenor trombones. Hector Berlioz preferred an orchestral trombone section with three tenors over a section with two tenors and a bass because he believed the bass would overpower the other two and upset the brass section's balance.<sup>19</sup> Although Berlioz had a major influence on French orchestration in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, other composers outside of France had already utilized the bass trombone significantly in their compositions. The bass trombone parts in Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* and *Don Giovanni*, along with Carl Maria von Weber's *Euryanthe* all contain

notes beyond the low range of a tenor trombone, indicating their specific intent for the bass trombone. In the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century Richard Wagner extended the section downward to include bass and contrabass trombones for his *Ring* cycle. Considering the established historical usage of the bass trombone outside of France, Lafosse might have included some of these orchestral excerpts for students as training tools or composed exercises to prepare them for performing other repertoires, but his focus remained on the French repertoire and usage of the instrument.

The treatment of the bass trombone in France (and its virtual absence from Lafosse's treatise) may be deserved when the instrument is examined. The size of the bore, bell, mouthpiece gave it a huge tone, and its acoustic design in the key of F changed the timbres of pitches. The volume was louder, just as Berlioz had warned. With its harmonic series based on F instead of *Bb*, tenor trombonists were forced to learn entirely new positions to play the instrument. An explanatory position chart in Lafosse's treatise accompanied by a set of exercises in his method might have proven valuable to his students that were called upon to play the bass trombone later in their careers. The long handle attached to its slide also made the bass trombone more awkward to operate than the tenor trombone. If composers had treated it more like a tuba it might have worked because of the instrument's lowered range and lack of agility. It wasn't until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century that professional bass trombone specialists were admitted into French orchestras.

While most early 20<sup>th</sup> century composers based their trombone writings on the established Italian and Austrian symbolism, French orchestral composers did not tap into the power of the instrument to the extent that other composers did. This is partly due to the instruments used in each country at the time. Outside of France the trombones used had a larger

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<sup>19</sup> Tom S. Wotton, *Hector Berlioz* (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), 117.

bell, bore diameter, and mouthpiece than French trombones, giving them a greater capacity for loud and robust sounds. The difference in French and other orchestral trombone usage is obvious, but Lafosse fails to address issues in the performance of non-French music in his treatise. This supports what has already been stated: Lafosse only focused on preparing his students for performing in French regions.

The underlying philosophy implied by Lafosse's method of instruction is that a course of trombone study should emerge from a given repertoire or orchestral or solo literature, but exercises should then be devised to isolate particular skills demanded by the music. This approach empowers composers to determine what should be expected of trombonists, rather than trombone performers, which suggests that pedagogues should adapt their curriculum to existing literature. The abundance of transcriptions attests to the assimilative nature of the entire trombone repertoire.



## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

Throughout his career as a trombone professor Andre Lafosse compiled and wrote music that emphasized elements of trombone technique based on the French solo and orchestral repertoire. His primary concern as a teacher was developing the skills for an orchestral career in France, but his method was to use exercises that focused on certain technical aspects of trombone performance. The exercises and etudes chosen were all influenced by French music regarding the skills deemed important by Lafosse (i.e. those required by the French orchestral and solo repertoire) and the acoustic design of the trombone in France in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Considering the holistic context of his role at the Paris Conservatory, Lafosse's curriculum and methodology should be deemed appropriately designed for the best interest of the students.

## APPENDIX

## Lafosse's Solo Curriculum

### *Tenor Trombone*

Bachelet	<i>Solo de Bachelet</i>
Bachelet	<i>Morceau de Concours</i>
Barat	<i>Andante et Allegro</i>
Barat	<i>Piece en Mi-bemol</i>
Berghmans	<i>Concertino pour Trombone et Orchestre</i>
Berghmans	<i>La Femme a Barbe</i>
*Bigot	<i>Impromptu pour Trombone et Piano (1927)</i>
*Bigot	<i>Variations pour Trombone et Piano (1949)</i>
Bonneau	<i>Capriccio pour Trombone et Piano</i>
Bonneau	<i>Fantaisie Concertante pour Trombone avec accompagnement d'Orchestre our de Piano</i>
Boutry	<i>Capriccio pour Trombone et Piano</i>
Bozza	<i>Ballade pour Trombone tenor et Piano</i>
Brown	<i>Meditation</i>
Busser	<i>Cantabile et Scherzando</i>
Busser	<i>Etude de concert</i>
Busser	<i>Phoebus Variations pour Trombone a Piano</i>
Busser	<i>Piece in Me-bemol</i>
Clerisse	<i>Priere</i>
Clerisse	<i>Theme de Concours</i>
Croce-Spinelli	<i>Solo de Concours</i>
Defaye	<i>Deux Danses</i>
Desportes	<i>Fantaisie en Si-bemol</i>
Dewanger	<i>Humoresque pour Trombone et Piano</i>
Dondeyne	<i>Cantabile et Caprice</i>
Dubois	<i>Solo de Concert</i>
Duclos	<i>Doubles sur un Choral</i>
Duclos	<i>Sa Majeste le trombone</i>
*Dutilleux	<i>Choral, Cadence, et Fugato (1950)</i>
Gagnebin	<i>Sarabande</i>
Gallois-Montbrun	<i>Aria</i>
Gaubert	<i>Morceau Symphonique</i>
Guide	<i>Suite les Caracteres du Trombone</i>
Lafosse, arr.	<i>Concerto en Fa Mineur by Handel</i>
Lafosse, arr.	<i>Suites for Violoncello by J.S. Bach</i>
Lafosse, arr.	<i>Trois Pieces de Style by Tartini, Schubert, and Vivaldi</i>
Lamy	<i>Choral Varie</i>
*Lepetit	<i>Piece de Concert (1955)</i>

Massis	<i>Impromptu</i>
Masson	<i>Twelve Various Studies for Slide Trombone, After Different Authors</i>
Missa	<i>Morceau de Concours</i>
de la Nux	<i>Solo de Concours</i>
Pfeiffer	<i>Solo de Trombone</i>
Poot	<i>Etude de Concert</i>
Reutter	<i>Ostinato pour Trombone et Piano</i>
Riviere	<i>Burlesque pour Trombone et Piano</i>
Ropartz	<i>Piece in Mi♯</i>
Salzedo	<i>Piece Concertante</i>
*Semler-Collery	<i>Fantaisie Lyrique (1960)</i>
Spisak	<i>Concertino</i>
Stojowski	<i>Fantaisie</i>
Tomasi	<i>Concerto pour Trombone et Orchestre</i>
Tournemire	<i>Legende pour Trombone avec accompagnement de Piano</i>
Vidal	<i>Deuxieme Solo de Concert pour Trombone Tenor</i>

#### *Bass Trombone*

Bitsch	<i>Impromptu pour Tuba Ut ou Trombone basse</i>
Boutry	<i>Tubaroque pour Tuba Ut ou Saxhorn basse Si♯ ou Trombone basse</i>
Bozza	<i>Allegro et Finale pour Contrebasse a cordes ou Tuba Ut ou Saxhorn basse ou Trombone basse</i>
Bozza	<i>Prelude et Allegro pour Contrebasse a cordes ou Tuba en Ut ou Trombone basse</i>
Bozza	<i>Theme Varie pour Tuba Ut Saxhorn basse Si♯ ou Trombone basse</i>
Beaucamp	<i>Cortège pour Tuba ou Trombone basse en Ut ou Saxhorn basse Si♯</i>
Clerisse	<i>Piece Lyrique pour Tuba Ut ou Contrebasse a cordes ou Saxhorn basse Si♯ ou Trombone basse</i>
Petit	<i>Grave pour Tuba en Ut ou Trombone basse ou Saxhorn basse Si♯</i>
Petit	<i>Fantaisie pour Tuba ou Trombone basse en Ut ou Saxhorn basse Si♯</i>
Petit	<i>Wagenia pour Tuba ou Trombone basse en Ut ou Saxhorn basse Si♯</i>
Semler-Collery	<i>Barcarolle et Chanson Bachique pour Tuba ou Trombone basse en Ut ou Saxhorn basse Si♯</i>

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\* Indicates pieces dedicated to Andre Lafosse.

Paris Conservatory Trombone Professors and their Primary  
Contributions to Trombone Pedagogy

Luigi Cherubini (1833)

Director of Conservatory: 1822

Started the first trombone class

Felix Vobaron (1833 – 36)

First official trombone professor

Composed pedagogical etudes

Antoine-Guillaume Dieppo (1836 – 71)

Solo trombonist for the premiere of Berlioz' *Symphonie Funebre et Triomphale*

Transcribed the 23 *Pensees Musicales* of Urbin (horn duets)

Paul (Lespaigne) Delisse (1871 – 88)

Transcribed masterworks of J.S. Bach, F.J. Haydn, W.A. Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn

Advocated slide trombone rather than valve trombone

Primary chamber composer for trombone: 1870 - 90

Louis Allard (1888 – 1925)

Transcribed the works of Arban and Bordogni for trombone

Henri Couillaud (1925 – 48)

Published nearly 100 (compiled) etudes, a brief tutor, and 36 vocalise transcriptions

Andre Lafosse (1948 – 60)

Published a complete method, collection of etudes and pedagogic treatise

Transcribed the works of Handel, J.S. Bach, Schubert, Tartini, and Vivaldi for trombone

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- Benny Sluchin, Trombonist, Ensemble InterContemporain (PARIS); Professor, Institut de Recherche et de Coordination Acoustique/Musique
- Jean Douay, Principal trombonist, National Orchestra of France
- Raymond Lapie, French historian and author
- J. Mark Thompson, Professor of Low Brass, Northwestern State University (Natchitoches, LA); Author of *French Music for Low Brass Instruments*
- Merle Hogg, Former Gabriel Masson trombone student, Paris Conservatory (1960)

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