

2017

Seth Nordin in recital

Matthew Seth Nordin
University of Northern Iowa

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SETH NORDIN IN RECITAL

An Abstract of a Recital
Submitted
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Music

Matthew Seth Nordin
University of Northern Iowa
May 2017

This Recital Abstract By: Seth Nordin

Entitled: Seth Nordin in Recital

Has been approved as meeting the thesis requirement for the
Degree of Master of Music

Date

Dr. Anthony Williams, Chair, Thesis Committee

Date

Dr. Randy Grabowski, Thesis Committee Member

Date

Dr. Alison Altstatt, Thesis Committee Member

Date

Dr. Kavita R. Dhanwada, Dean, Graduate College

This Recital By: Seth Nordin

Performed on: March 7, 2017

Entitled: Seth Nordin in Recital

Has been approved as meeting the thesis requirement for the
Degree of Master of Music

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Date	Dr. Kavita R. Dhanwada, Dean, Graduate College

ABSTRACT

This recital was prepared in collaboration with Dr. Polina Khatsko, Brent Mead, Nathaniel Welshons, and Tom Rauch. It was presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the University of Northern Iowa's Master of Music degree. The works presented were carefully chosen to showcase the performer's instrumental proficiency and understanding of a variety of solo tenor and alto trombone literature and chamber music. They are, in order, *Concerto for Alto Trombone and Piano* by Georg Christoph Wagenseil, selections from *Dichterliebe* by Robert Schumann, *Improvisation No. 1* by Enrique Crespo, *Fantasy for Trombone* by Sigismond Stojowski, *Concerto for Trombone and Orchestra* by Launy Grøndahl, and *Posaunenquartett* by Frigyes Hidas.

Georg Christoph Wagenseil, *Concerto for Alto Trombone and Piano*

Georg Christoph Wagenseil was born in Vienna in 1715.¹ He made a living as a composer, keyboardist, and teacher. His father worked as a functionary in the Viennese imperial court.² Wagenseil was appointed to the court as a composer in 1739 and served until his death in 1777.³ He was celebrated as a renowned keyboard virtuoso and pivotal figure of Classical style in Vienna.⁴ The *Concerto for Alto Trombone* was written in 1763 for an unknown trombonist in Vienna.⁵ According

¹ Kucaba, John and van Boer, Bertil H, "Wagenseil, Georg Christoph," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/29767>, Accessed October 15, 2016.

² Kucaba and van Boer, "Wagenseil, Georg Christoph."

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Oliver, Jason L, "The Creation of a Performance Edition of the Georg Christoph Wagenseil Concerto for Trombone With Attention Given to the Surviving Manuscripts and Primary Sources of Performance Practice from the Middle of the Eighteenth Century," DMA diss., (University of North Texas, 2010), 8.

to Jason Oliver, this concerto "broke ground for the trombone's use in a secular venue,"⁶ and was one of the first solos written for trombone, along with Leopold Mozart's *Concerto for Alto Trombone*.

When performing this piece, the performer must be familiar with proper slide placement on alto trombone. The alto trombone is based on the E-flat overtone series, unlike its tenor and bass trombone counterparts, which are based on the B-flat overtone series. Due to this, and to the shortness of its slide, the slide positions on alto trombone differ both in literal distance and distance relative to the instrument's size. Wagenseil's *Concerto* is in the key of E-flat major, which is the overtone series in first position on the alto trombone. This is commonly known as the home key for alto trombone, as B-flat major is for tenor and bass.

This concerto consists of two double-exposition movements – one slow, one fast. The first movement is marked *adagio* and is performed with the eighth-note at or near 88 beats per minute. Throughout the first movement, the performer is required to trill over several different quarter-notes. These can be achieved in two ways: either by rapid alternating of partials in the same position or by using a valve attachment on the instrument. This movement does not require the performer to extend beyond fourth position (aside from the B half-note in measure twenty-five⁷), allowing the trills to be accessed in one of the first four positions. If the trill contains an interval of a third or more, the performer must either use the valve (if the performer's instrument is so equipped) or provide his or her own ornamentation. Additionally, no dynamic markings of any kind can be found in this movement, leaving the performer to

⁶ Oliver, "The Creation of a Performance Edition," 8.

⁷ Wagenseil, Georg, *Concerto per Trombone*, (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1979).

interpret shaping of passages. Performance of this piece requires the performer to maintain a comfortable high register, with the highest written pitch in this movement being E-flat 5. This edition of the *Concerto* also contains a set of optional cadenzas. The second movement is marked *Allegro assai* and should be performed with the quarter note at or near 130 beats per minute. This movement exhibits fewer trills than the first and contains no dynamic markings. Articulation markings are also relatively scarce in this movement, aside from occasional slurred note-groupings. However, many appoggiaturas can be found in both movements and should be performed by borrowing half the rhythmic value of the following note.

Perhaps the most difficult aspects of this work are adhering to the Classical style and sound and not overblowing the alto trombone. With the lack of dynamic markings and general lack of articulation markings, character or mood changes can be problematic. The performer must understand which articulations are appropriate in various passages, based on the Classical style. In terms of sound, most performers are accustomed to using large-bore tenor or bass trombone air pressure and can easily put too much air through the alto trombone. This can cause the tone to spread or to have an edgy quality.

Enrique Crespo, *Improvisation No. 1 for Trombone*

Enrique Crespo was born in Montevideo, Uruguay in 1941. He originally studied architecture and music. In 1967, he moved to Berlin to study trombone and composition and remained in Europe indefinitely. He is an orchestral trombonist, jazz soloist, band leader, composer, and arranger. He composed *Improvisation* in 1983

by literally improvising the material on trombone and later writing the material down and organizing it.⁸

This piece is written and performed without accompaniment, and includes many extended techniques that will be discussed further. The entrance of this piece must be highly exaggerated by the performer. He or she must start the first note as softly as possible and crescendo as loudly as possible (with a controlled sound), gradually working the slide vibrato in and exaggerating it at the end. The following phrase begins with sixteenth-notes leading to pedal A and must first be played loudly, followed by a reiteration that must be performed very softly. This passage is found frequently throughout the entire work. The following sixteenth-triplets passage ascending in perfect fourths is also found throughout the work and is quite difficult to achieve. A drastic character change on the second line requires the performer to play in the upper register at a soft dynamic with an easy, graceful sound. The first page continues by incorporating much of this material, with more drastic character shifts. The performer must execute these shifts convincingly.

The following section of this work is written in 7/8 with the eighth-note marked at 138 beats per minute. This section includes much syncopation and requires the performer to execute turns on sixteenth-notes. A steady tempo must be maintained throughout, which is the primary difficulty of this particular section. Following the 7/8 section, the performer is required to make rapid arpeggiations and leaps of more than two octaves in some cases. Near the end of the second page, the performer is required to hold an F5 while moving the slide quickly through its entire length. For

⁸ Immel, Don, "Tutti Trombones," program notes for *Improvisation No. 1* (Seattle: Meany Theater, March 6, 2002).

this reason, the performer must be comfortable in the very high register. The second page transitions into the third with a soft, glissando passage that must be performed in a comical manner. This transitions into a soft, but light, technical section of sixteenth-note runs.

The performer must execute these runs with a light and clean articulation. At the *agitato* marking, the time signature is 5/8 and includes two pairs of four sixteenth-notes leading to an eighth-note. This is repeated four times. The performer must lead the sixteenth-notes to the eighth-note convincingly. The final iteration is held on the last note, which moves into a lip trill and a glissando to the performer's highest register. Due to the upcoming *accelerando*, the sixteenth-note runs following this line should begin slowly in order to give direction and not arrive at the final tempo too early. By the final sixteenth-note runs, the performer must be double-tonguing at the fastest speed he or she can achieve. At the end of the third page, the original sixteenth-note run to the pedal A reappears. In this instance, it is marked with a *ritardando*. As the performer slows, the notes must expand in length relative to the change in tempo.

The final page brings the return of the 7/8 section with some added material. Sixteenth-note triplets are now found in this section, as is another glissando into the performer's highest register. The most difficult part is the glissando up from E4 to E5, then down to B-flat 4 and down again to A4. Between the B-flat and the A, the performer must create an extreme crescendo very quickly for characteristic effect. As the piece nears the end, eighth-note triplets descending in fourths appear. These are to be performed with a *ritardando*, and the notes must expand in length relative to the change in tempo.

Being an unaccompanied solo, this piece requires the performer to exaggerate character shifts, extended techniques, and dynamic contrast. The range of this piece is quite extensive, from A1 to F5. Many of the dynamic and character shifts are rapid and exaggerated, and almost every measure includes a crescendo, diminuendo, triple- or double-tonguing, glissandi, or extreme articulation variation. The 7/8 section requires the performer to keep a steady internal pulse. Although plenty of technical difficulties can be found in this composition, the most notable challenge is truly committing to the extreme variations in character, articulation, and dynamics.

Robert Schumann, Selections from *Dichterliebe*

Robert Schumann, born in Saxony in 1810,⁹ spent his time as a composer and music critic. He was born the fifth child in a household of literary enthusiasts.¹⁰ Schumann's primary artistic influences were Jean Paul for literature and Franz Schubert for music.¹¹ He composed many notable orchestral works, chamber works, and art songs. *Dichterliebe* remains one of Schumann's most well-known song cycles. The title of this collection translates in English to "Poet's Love," drawing from his background in literature. *Dichterliebe* was composed in 1840 for voice and piano and is set to a collection of sixteen poems written by Heinrich Heine.¹² Four songs from this cycle were chosen for this recital.

Vocal works for the tenor voice often translate well to trombone, as their range is similar. For this reason, *Dichterliebe* is commonly performed by both student and

⁹ Daverio, John and Sams, Eric, "Schumann, Robert." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online.* Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40704>, accessed October 15, 2016.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

professional trombonists. Trombonists often strive to achieve a singing quality on the instrument, and performing vocal works enables the performers to showcase this ability. Knowing the pronunciation of the texts in this work can be helpful in choosing proper articulations. This is the most challenging goal of performing the work. The primary goal when performing vocal works is to explore musical expression through articulation, style, and phrasing.

The first song, *Im wunderschönen Monat Mai*, must be played with a dark, heavy sound and a soft, legato tongue. The eight-measure melody is performed twice, requiring the performer to explore alternative phrasing choices for the second instance. This song was originally intended to be sung softly, so the trombonist will be challenged in his or her soft playing to provide enough air and to remain relaxed. Performance of the second song, *Aus meinen Thränen sprühen*, must exhibit a similar legato quality to the first with dynamic swells being more prevalent. Many half-step resolutions can be found in this song, and the performer should exploit these by leaning into the resolution. The third song, *Die Rose, die Lilie, die Taube*, is quicker and much lighter than the previous two. In articulating this song, the tongue must also be much quicker and lighter. It is imperative that the performer blow continuous air through the two-sixteenth to eighth-note lines to avoid sounding too choppy. The seventh song, *Ich grolle nicht*, is stylistically heavy. The performer should take care not to play with too much front on the articulation to avoid any splatting of the sound. Instead, the performer must use air to produce a heavier articulation. To truly translate this song cycle for the trombone, performers must acquire and reference vocal recordings of the work and learn to apply dynamic, phrase, and articulation markings from vocalists.

Sigismond Stojowski, *Fantasy for Trombone*

Sigismond (or Zygmunt) Stojowski was born in the Strzelce region of Poland in 1869,¹³ although some conflicting accounts state his birth year as 1870.¹⁴ His primary work was as a composer, pianist, and teacher.¹⁵ In Kraków, Stojowski studied composition with Żeleński and piano with Diemer.¹⁶ He moved to Paris in 1887 to study piano and composition and later had lessons with Paderewski, Saint-Saëns, and Massenet.¹⁷ In 1905, he moved to the United States,¹⁸ where he served as head of the piano department at New York Institute of Musical Art from 1906 until 1912.¹⁹ Stojowski was a virtuoso pianist and orchestral composer who drew his influences from Wagner, Saint-Saëns, Franck, and French impressionism.²⁰ In 1905, Stojowski composed *Fantasie for Trombone and Piano*, his first composition since moving to America.²¹ The work was originally dedicated to Theodore Dubois, director of the Conservatory of Paris.²²

Because of the frequent changes in tempo and key, drastic character shifts, dynamic extremes, and difficult coordination with the piano, Stojowski's *Fantasy* is ideal for a contest piece. The *Fantasy* is a one-movement work and is mostly through-composed, although the motive of dotted-eighth – sixteenth – to sustained note is frequently employed throughout. This motive is occasionally written instead

¹³ Chylińska, Teresa, "Stojowski, Zygmunt," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/26820>, Accessed October 15, 2016.

¹⁴ Biskupski, M. B. B, "Review: Zygmunt Stojowski: Life and Music by Joseph A. Herter," *Polish American Studies* 65, no. 2 (2008): 91-92.

¹⁵ Chylińska, "Stojowski, Zygmunt."

¹⁶ Chylińska, "Stojowski, Zygmunt."

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Biskupski, "Review: Zygmunt Stojowski," 91.

¹⁹ Chylińska, "Stojowski, Zygmunt."

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Herter, Joseph. "The Life of Zigmund Stojowski," *The Polish Music Journal* 5, no. 2 (2002): 54.

²² Ibid.

with a sixteenth-rest following the eighth-note to indicate more space. Stylistically speaking, this work is constantly shifting character. For example, the first four measures are marked *Allegro risoluto*, which changes to *Poco maestoso* in the fifth measure and to *Lento ma non troppo* in the seventh. By measure seven, the performer has already encountered three different tempo/stylistic markings.

Due to the Romantic nature of this work, the performer must be prepared to make tempo changes through *ritardando*, *piu mosso*, *accelerando*, and *rallantando*. Although this work falls under the category of tonality, many of the chords in the accompaniment can be troublesome for intonation on the trombone. On the first page, one particular challenge is the chromatic *accelerando* passage that also accelerates rhythmically from eighth-notes to eighth-note triplets to sixteenth-notes. The performer must communicate with the collaborator how these changes in tempo will be approached. Near the end of the first page, the performer is required to execute a *diminuendo* while leading up to a B4, making air support a major challenge. Like the first page, the second page also includes many *ritardandos* and *accelerandos*, although it is often marked *Tempo I*. This page contains challenges in the coordination of entrances after piano passages at the *marcato* and *poco sostenuto* sections. The performer must be familiar with the accompaniment to execute these entrances well. The final page contains new challenges, such as the rapid arpeggiations in third, fourth, and fifth positions. As the piece ends, the tempo slows to a near halt until a *piano*-marked A major arpeggio leads up to a C-sharp. At *piano* volume, this can prove to be quite difficult. The primary challenge of this work, however, is ensuring that the performer and the collaborator remain together during the frequent (and sometimes drastic) changes in tempo.

Launy Grøndahl, *Concerto for Trombone and Orchestra*

Launy Grøndahl was born in Denmark in 1886.²³ He studied violin and composition with Axel Gade, (first violinist in the Royal Danish Orchestra) and composition with Ludolf Nielson.²⁴ He worked as a violinist at age thirteen in the Orchestra of the Casino Theatre in Copenhagen and later became conductor at the Danish Musical Society.²⁵ Composed in Italy in 1924, Grøndahl's *Concerto for Trombone and Orchestra* was originally written for Vilhelm Aarkrog, one of the trombonists in the Royal Danish Orchestra.²⁶

This concerto is one of the most performed of the trombone repertoire. It is featured on many recordings by prominent trombonists, including Joseph Alessi, Christian Lindberg, David Vining, Steve Witser, and Jorgen van Rijen. It consists of three movements – medium, slow, fast -- all in sonata-allegro form. The Romantic nature of this work allows for a heightened sense of musical expression. Articulation and expressive markings are quite clear in this edition²⁷ of the work. Most of this composition is written in triple meter, although the second movement is mostly in 7/8.

The first movement is marked *Moderato assai ma molto maestoso* and is in the key of F minor. The performer must take care to stay in tempo throughout, aside from the rubato, accelerando, and ritardando sections. This movement contains many pitches at or above B-flat 4, so the performer must be comfortable in the high register on trombone. Much of the challenge in this movement is ensuring that the

²³ Grøndahl, Launy. *Concerto for Trombone and Orchestra* (Place: Edition-S, 1924) i.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Grøndahl, *Concerto for Trombone*. i.

²⁶ Granau, Martin, "Launy Grøndahl's *Trombone Concerto* Written for Vilhelm Aarkrog and the Orchestra at the Copenhagen Zoo," *ITA Journal* 26 no. 2 (1998), 48.

²⁷ Grøndahl, *Concerto for Trombone*, i.

stylistic markings are being performed convincingly. For instance, rehearsal 1 is marked *espressivo*, in stark contrast to the previous *maestoso*, and the performer must highlight this contrast. Also, the rhythmic figure of two sixteenths with three sixteenth-triplets appears frequently in the first movement and must be performed appropriately. In measure 80, the performer must be sure to move the slide quickly enough on this rhythmic figure to avoid any breaking of the tone.

The second movement, marked *Andante grave*, begins in B-flat minor and ends in the relative major, D-flat. It is to be performed very slowly, with the eighth-note at 80 beats per minute. Rhythmic integrity is essential in this movement in order to stay aligned with the piano. If the performer chooses the optional 8va and 8vb, this movement will range from D-flat 2 to D-flat 5. The second theme presents the greatest difficulty of this movement due to its wide intervallic leaps that must be performed while maintaining a *cantabile* style. This is especially true if the performer chooses the 8va when the theme is in D-flat.

The third and final movement begins with an introductory section marked *Maestoso*. The remainder of the movement is marked *Allegretto, scherzando*. The first theme is written in 6/8 and is saturated with syncopation. In a “song and dance” format, this theme is the dance. The performer must maintain the dotted-quarter pulse throughout to properly convey the mood of a dance. This is perhaps the most difficult part of the movement and must be prepared with plenty of metronome practice. The second theme is the “song” part of this movement, although the pulse remains the same. When this theme returns later in D-flat, many performers choose to move this theme up an octave, resulting in an E-flat 5, the highest note of the work. This is not indicated in the score but is commonly found in performance of this

work. With its (potential) range of D-flat 2 to E-flat 5, abrupt character shifts, lyricism within wide intervallic leaps, and rhythmic complexity, Grøndahl's *Concerto for Trombone and Orchestra* showcases a performer's musicianship and proficiency on the trombone.

Frigyes Hidas, *Posaunenquartett*

Frigyes Hidas was born in Budapest in 1928.²⁸ He made a living as a composer and pianist.²⁹ He studied piano with Zoltán Horusitzky in Budapest, composition with János Viski, and sacred music and conducting with László Somogyi.³⁰ Hidas served as the conductor of the National Theatre from 1952-1966 and won the Erkel Prize for his Oboe Concerto in 1959.³¹ He composed works for a multitude of various instruments and ensembles, including several for trombone. *Posaunenquartett* was written in 1996, near the end of his life.³²

This quartet consists of three movements – moderate, fast, slow. The first movement is marked *Moderato*, with the quarter-note pulse at 96 beats per minute. For this recital, the performers have chosen a slower tempo of nearer 78 beats per minute to achieve more of a sense of heaviness throughout this movement. This contrasts well with the lighter second movement. Few articulation and dynamic markings appear in this movement, so the performers must choose these appropriately. Moreover, the performers must match note length and articulation to achieve a unified sound. For example, the opening theme of four repeated dotted-

²⁸ Dalos, Anna and György Kroó. "Hidas, Frigyes," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online* (Oxford University Press), <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/12992>, Accessed October 15, 2016.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Hidas, Frigyes, *Posaunenquartett* (Halberstadt, Germany: Musikverlag Bruno Uetz, 1996), 1.

quarter – eighth into two eighths must be performed with precisely-matched note lengths and articulations to avoid sloppiness. With very few articulation markings, this is the most difficult task of the first movement.

The second movement is marked *Allegretto*, with the quarter-note set to 100 beats per minute. This movement undergoes many meter changes: 4/4, 3/8, 4/8, 5/8, 6/8, 7/8, 8/8, 6/4, and 9/4. The eighth-note remains constant throughout, so the performers must maintain subdivision of the eighth-note to maintain the tempo. This movement contains the most drastic character shifts of the three yet still incorporates very few dynamic marks. It begins with pairs of trombones alternating melodic content: first and second trombone, and third and fourth trombone. Matching articulation in this movement is challenging, and performers must be sure the alternating pairs match each other. At letter D, the texture becomes homorhythmic in the top three parts, with the bass trombone filling in the sustained notes for added motion. With no articulation markings, performers must provide them and be sure they all match. The 11-beat sustained note in the top three parts at the end of the recapitulation is marked *fortissimo* but must be brought down to allow the bass trombone's melodic content to shine through.

The third movement is unusual as a closing movement, as it is a chorale, marked at 76 beats per minute. It is the shortest movement and is only marked *forte* at the beginning. To avoid monotony, performers must again provide their own dynamic shaping. This movement must be performed in a *sostenuto* or *tenuto* style with very little (if any) space between notes. The primary challenge in this movement is also found in the other two, which is for the performers to produce their own dynamic,

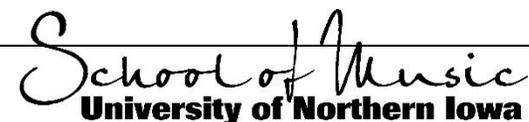
phrasing, and articulation shapes. This work is not one of extreme technical demand but does ask much of the performers in terms of musicianship.

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About the Artist

Seth Nordin is a Master's student in Trombone Performance at UNI. He received his BM in Trombone Performance from the University of Central Arkansas. During his time at UNI, he has performed with many ensembles, including UNI Wind Symphony, Northern Iowa Symphony Orchestra, Jazz Panthers, Jazz Band I, TDL Trombone Quartet, 5Degrees Brass Quintet, Jazz Slides, Carbon-Based Octet, and the UNI Trombone Choir.



Seth Nordin, Alto and Tenor Trombones

with

Dr. Polina Khatsko, piano

Brent Mead, Trombone

Nathaniel Welshons, Trombone

Thomas Rauch, Bass Trombone

March 7, 2017, 6:00 p.m.

Davis Hall, GBPAC

Program

Concerto for Alto Trombone and Piano(1763).....Georg C. Wagenseil
(1715 - 1777)

- I. Adagio
- II. Allegro assai

Selections from *Dichterliebe*(1840).....Robert Schumann
(1810 - 1856)

- I. Im wunderschönen Monat Mai
- II. Aus meinen Tränen sprießen
- III. Die Rose, die Lilie, die Taube, die Sonne
- VII. Ich grolle nicht

With Dr. Polina Khatsko, Piano

Improvisation No. 1 for Trombone(1993).....Enrique Crespo
(1941-)

Fantasy for Trombone(1905).....Sigismond Stojowski
(1869 - 1946)

Concerto for Trombone(1924).....Launy Grøndahl
(1886 - 1960)

- I. Moderato assai ma molto maestoso
- II. Quasi una Leggenda: Andante grave
- III. Finale: Maestoso - Rondo

With Dr. Polina Khatsko, Piano

Posaunenquartett(1996).....Frigyes Hidas
(1928 - 2007)

- I. Moderato
- II. Allegretto
- III. Choral

With Brent Mead and Nathaniel Welshons, Trombone
Tom Rauch, Bass Trombone

INTERMISSION