

2019

Graduate recital in trombone

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GRADUATE RECITAL IN TROMBONE

An Abstract of a Recital

Submitted

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Music in Performance

Thomas Mortenson

University of Northern Iowa

May 2019

This Abstract by: Thomas Mortenson

Entitled: Master's Recital: Thomas Mortenson, Trombone

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

Date _____ Dr. Anthony Williams, Chair, Thesis Committee

Date _____ Dr. Alison Altstatt, Thesis Committee Member

Date _____ Dr. Randy Grabowski, Thesis Committee Member

Date _____ Dr. Jennifer Waldron, Dean, Graduate College

This Recital Performance by: Thomas Mortenson

Entitled: Master's Recital: Thomas Mortenson, Trombone

Date of Recital: March 12, 2019

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

Date	Dr. Anthony Williams, Chair, Thesis Committee
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ABSTRACT

Introduction

The purpose of this recital is to partially fulfill the requirements for the Master of Music degree in Trombone Performance. It features repertoire selected to demonstrate the performer's musical and technical abilities while exploring a wide range of historical differences in trombone pedagogy. Consideration was given to creating a cohesive program arranged to help prevent stamina issues related to the technical demands of the repertoire. The program features Georg Christoph Wagenseil's *Concerto in E-flat Major for Trombone*; two selected Lieder from Johannes Brahms's *Vier Gesänge*, op. 43; Henri Tomasi's *Concerto for Trombone and Orchestra*; Frigyes Hidas's *Fantasia for Trombone*; and Heinrich Schütz's "Attendite, Popule Meus," SWV 270, from his *Symphoniae Sacrae I*, Op. 6.

Georg Christoph Wagenseil—*Concerto in E-flat Major for Trombone* (c. 1755)

Georg Christoph Wagenseil was born into a family of bureaucrats in Vienna on January 29, 1715. He received musical training at an early age, and by 1735, his reputation as a composer and keyboardist earned him a scholarship to study with Johann Fux, Kapellmeister for the Viennese court. Four years later, he was appointed composer of the Viennese court, where he remained until his death in 1777.¹

¹ John Kucaba, "Wagenseil, Georg Christoph," *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001), accessed September 19, 2018, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000029767>.

Wagenseil's *Concerto in E-flat Major* was composed between 1755 and 1759 and is the earliest known concerto for solo trombone.² At the time it was written, the Viennese Court had a total of five trombonists. Leopold Christian, Jr., Andreas Boog, and Ignaz Steinbrückner were the highest paid among them; one of these men most likely gave the premier performance of Wagenseil's *Concerto*.³

The piece is written for alto trombone and consists of two movements: *Adagio* and *Allegro assai*. The first movement, *Adagio*, is organized into concerto-sonata form and begins with a double exposition with the piano followed by the trombone. After the double exposition, ritornello sections from the piano alternate with solo trombone episodes. There are four ritornello sections, which decrease in duration, and three solo sections, which increase in duration and lead to a cadenza before the last ritornello. This movement may be considered late-Baroque in style because of the modulation from E-flat major to the dominant key of B-flat major at the end of the first solo section—a technique often used at the end of the exposition section of sonata-allegro form in the Classical period. However, there is no development section or recapitulation of the opening themes in the first movement, indicating that this is a pre-classical work.⁴

The second movement, marked *Allegro assai*, follows a similar form but develops the ideas of the first ritornello section to a greater extent than the first movement. The opening solo section (mm. 26-55) starts in E-flat major and cadences in the dominant key

² Jason L. Oliver, "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," (D.M.A. diss., University of North Texas, 2010), 8.

³ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 12.

of B-flat major. It is a paraphrase of the first ritornello and includes most of the same material. The second solo section (mm. 66-93) repeats the opening motive in C minor, the relative minor of the original tonic key of E-flat major, and sequences the material found in mm. 34-35 of the trombone part back to E-flat major before moving again to C minor. There is a clear recapitulation of the opening theme in the tonic key at m. 113. The edition used for this performance contains additions of a cadenza and additional solo material (found only in the solo part) in the last twelve bars of the second movement.⁵ While cadenzas were often performed at the end of slow movements of Classical pieces, early manuscripts of Wagenseil's *Concerto* contain no indication for an improvised cadenza at the end of the second movement.⁶ Therefore, this performance does not include a cadenza at the end of the second movement but still retains the additional melodic material found in the modern edition, which creates a more climactic ending.

Wagenseil's *Concerto* was selected for this program because it contains unique stylistic challenges for the performer and provides musical contrast. The *galant* style of the work and lack of articulation and dynamic markings force the performer to study scores and performances of other early Classical works in order to play with the appropriate nuances. For instance, many melodic sequences are found in the second movement, but no dynamic indication is given. It is up to the performer to decide how to

⁵ Georg Christoph Wagenseil, "Posaunenkonzert," UE 25146, (Hungary: Universal Edition, 1979).

⁶ Eva Badura-Skoda, Andrew V. Jones, and William Drabkin, "Cadenza," *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001), accessed February 21, 2019, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000029767>.

vary the style and dynamic of each repetition of the sequence in order to keep the melody interesting.

The ornamentation throughout the work also creates challenges for the trombonist. At most cadence points in the first movement, Wagenseil indicates trills, many of which are not in an idiomatic register for the alto trombone. If the trills are executed as traditionally understood, the result on the alto trombone will be clumsy, stylistically inappropriate, and will cause the trombonist to drag the tempo. The performer must carefully plan how each trill is to be performed so that the harmonic tension is increased before the cadence and is then appropriately resolved.

The alto trombone provides a nice contrast to the tenor trombone repertoire on this program. However, it brings unique challenges to the performer. Compared to the tenor trombone, the smaller bore of the alto trombone is easily “overblown,” resulting in uncharacteristic tone and poor intonation. If a performer plays alto trombone with the same technique with which tenor trombone is played, fatigue can quickly become an issue. Additionally, the slide positions on alto trombone are closer together than on tenor trombone, increasing the difficulty of playing in tune. Tenor trombonists must therefore rely on their ears, rather than slide positions, for intonation when playing alto trombone.

Johannes Brahms—*Vier Gesänge* op. 43:

1. “Von ewiger Liebe,” 2. “Die Mainacht”(1864-1866)

It is common for trombonists to borrow vocal transcriptions to supplement the repertoire available for their instrument. Though the trombone has existed since the mid-fifteenth century, the bulk of available repertoire—solo works, in particular—are from

the twentieth century. Performance of vocal songs works well for trombone due to its unique design that features a fully-chromatic slide. Brahms did not write any works for solo trombone, but he has a rich selection of Lieder from which to draw. The two selections from *Vier Gesänge* op. 43 were chosen for this recital because of their emotional depth and programmatic quality that contrast with the rest of the music on this program.

“Von ewiger Liebe” and “Die Mainacht” from Opus 43, were written in 1864 and 1866, respectively. The text of “Von ewiger Liebe” is taken from August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben’s translation of a traditional Wendish tale.⁷ The poem tells the story of a distressed young man walking his beloved back to her house in the night. He has done something foolish and is now, in a noble attempt to spare her shame, giving her the choice to leave him. Her response is optimistic as she reveals that her love for him is unconditional and that nothing can sever their love. Brahms enhances this poem by painting two different aural pictures. The first half of the piece, which describes the situation from the man’s perspective, is dark and foreboding. Just before the woman speaks her message of hope, the piano modulation from B minor to B major and the change from simple meter to compound meter, create a musical representation of the change in perspective between the two lovers.

⁷ George S. Bozarth and Walter Frisch, “Brahms, Johannes,” *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001), accessed January 13, 2019, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000051879>.

“Die Mainacht” is based on a poem by Ludwig C. H. Höltz.⁸ The poem describes a person wandering through a garden at night while lamenting his or her loneliness. The cooing of a pair of doves in the trees only reminds the character of love that has not been found. The individual sheds a single tear, represented in the music by a downward arpeggio from the longest and highest note.

There are challenges in expressing the emotional nuances of the human voice on trombone, but the variety of articulations that are possible on the instrument (in addition to the portamento caused by slide movement) can make this an easier task. It would be advantageous for trombonists to analyze the proper pronunciation of the text in a vocal piece and listen to several recordings to ensure proper execution of articulations. For this performance, nearly all words that begin with an open vowel sound are articulated with an air start—that is, no tongue is used in the articulation. Hard consonants at the beginning of words are attacked with a traditional “ta” articulation. Softer consonants, such as “d,” “b,” or “g,” are legato tongued with a “da” syllable. This methodical approach to planning articulations is not applied to the entire work, but only to important words, usually at the beginning of phrases.

Another aspect of performing these pieces is vibrato. Trombone vibrato is usually executed in one of two ways: slide vibrato and jaw vibrato. Properly executed jaw vibrato frees the tone and closely resembles the human voice. The speed and amplitude of the

⁸ Ibid.

vibrato is an important point to consider. Generally, lower notes require slower and narrower vibrato and higher notes require vibrato that is faster and wider.

Henri Tomasi—*Concerto for Trombone* (1956)

Henri Tomasi (1901-1971) began his studies in composition at the Paris Conservatoire in 1917 under the instruction of Philippe Gaubert, Georges Caussade, Paul Vidal, and Vincent d'Indy. He went on to earn several scholarship awards in composition and conducting from the French government. In addition to composing, he spent much of his career as an international conductor of opera and ballet. During his early career, he was best known for his operas, but his concerti for wind instruments are now his most popular works in the United States.⁹

Tomasi's *Concerto for Trombone and Orchestra* (1956) is among the most romantic in the trombone repertoire because of its ballade-like lyricism, which was heavily influenced by jazz music. Many French composers emulated the expressive, singing quality of American jazz trombonists such as Tommy Dorsey. Works such as Milhaud's *Concertino d'Hiver*, Bozza's *Ballade*, and Casterde's *Sonatine* are a result of jazz influence in general.¹⁰

The first movement of the concerto, *Andante et scherzo - Valse*, is organized into two sections. The first section is predominantly in 12/8 to mimic the swing-feel of a jazz ballad. The second section is a quick waltz that features extended hemiolas, after which

⁹ Richard Langham Smith, "Tomasi, Henri," *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001), accessed October 11, 2018, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000028080>.

¹⁰ Ted Hale, "The Influence of Selected Stylistic Elements of Jazz on Seven 20th-Century Solo Trombone Pieces," (D.M. diss., Indiana University, 1996) 14, 19, 31.

there is a recapitulation of the ballad style that establishes the mood for the next movement.

The extensive motivic development of the concerto begins with the opening trombone cadenza, which presents most of the themes of the piece. The first and main theme is taken from George Bassman's melody "I'm Getting Sentimental Over You," made famous by trombonist Tommy Dorsey who played the high, lyrical melody with rapid slide vibrato on the most popular recording. The melody in *Concerto* is almost identical to the beginning of Bassman's tune except that it is transposed and the fourth scale degree replaces the fifth scale degree, creating a leap of an augmented fourth in the melody between the fourth and seventh scale degrees. The *Sentimental* theme is developed for much of the first movement. Each reiteration of the theme is lower and louder until, after rehearsal number 3, the theme starts on a G2 and is played at a *forte* dynamic, giving it a heroic quality.

A second important theme in the first movement appears at rehearsal number 5. It consists of an alternation between two pitches a minor third apart, and it emphasizes the compound meter by placing the highest note of the figure on the beat. It will be referred to as the *romantic* theme because of the context in which it is played and how it is later developed. Tomasi has indicated *molto vibrato* at the appearance of this theme and always pairs its later occurrences with an *espressivo* marking. This theme is developed through the rest of the ballad section of the first movement. The *Sentimental* theme returns at the trombone's entrance in the waltz section and appears three more times

before the end of the movement. The recapitulation is an understated combination of both the *Sentimental* and *romantic* themes.

Each initial presentation of the different themes needs to be uniquely expressed by the performer so that their characters can be easily distinguished. Another performance consideration would be the numerous hemiola figures in the first movement that require the performer to constantly subdivide the beat. Coordination between the piano and trombone is essential throughout the movement (especially in the Waltz section) because one part is often playing a hemiola against the other.

The second movement, *Nocturne*, is marked *andante*. It is in simple meter and contrasts with the compound meter of the first movement. Dotted-eighth sixteenth note rhythms are present throughout in imitation of swing eighth notes. The movement's introspective quality and the fact that Tomasi has marked several sections as *tempo di blues* hint that this movement is based on the blues. This is further emphasized by the use of straight and cup mutes, which change the timbre of the trombone for expressive purposes. It should be noted that *tempo di blues* is a stylistic indication and not a tempo marking.

Nocturne begins with an ominous ostinato supporting a new theme in the trombone part that becomes the subject of several variations during the movement. This theme is initially innocent in character and even sounds like many children's songs with sol, mi, la, sol solmization melodies, such as "Ring Around The Rosie," but it contains mature elements of trombone technique: the melody ascends to Db5 in the first few phrases. The *innocent* theme returns at rehearsal number 4, but it is now played through a

straight mute and rises to a D5. The theme returns once again at rehearsal 6 where it has developed into a quarter-note triplet figure and has increased in volume. The *Sentimental* theme from the first movement returns at the first *tempo di blues* section, and at rehearsal 12, both themes are brought together, leading to the climax of the movement.

The extremely high tessitura, combined with long phrase structures and multiple mute changes, easily fatigues the performer and requires careful pacing. It is important to play with lighter articulations to maintain a French concept of sound so the notes are not overblown. Additionally, the soloist is more exposed by the thinner musical texture and therefore needs to be more expressive.

Tambourin, the final movement, is much more percussive than the previous two movements and has the quality of a Broadway musical overture. It is marked as *Allegro giocoso* and is organized in sonata-rondo form. The recurring theme in this rondo is derived from the *Sentimental* theme of the first movement. The melody at rehearsal 4 in *Tambourin* is taken from the opening cadenza of the first movement and appears several times in the second movement. Each occurrence of the rondo theme is almost always preceded by a two-measure unison figure in the piano that first appeared six measures before rehearsal 25 in the first movement. Tomasi used this figure in every movement as accompaniment but features it on its own in the third. At rehearsal 17, the trombone plays the figure in augmentation, which acts as a transition point to bring back the original *romantic* theme at rehearsal 19 where it is accompanied by that same piano figure. The section ends with a reference to the *innocent* motive from the second movement. The

final section of the piece features restatements of all the main themes before concluding with a C minor-major seventh arpeggio in the trombone part.

The performer must be wary not to play this movement heavily or to make the staccato notes too short. With the percussive accompaniment and increasing tempo, playing in a relaxed manner becomes essential. Furthermore, because there is more syncopation in this movement and the trombone begins playing on the first upbeat of many phrases, there is a greater tendency to drag the tempo.

Tomasi's *Concerto* was selected for this recital because it is one of the most challenging works in the trombone repertoire due to its high tessitura, variety of styles, and expressive demands. Much preparation with an accompanist is needed because of the intricacy of each part, allowing the performer to grow as a collaborative musician. French trombone repertoire requires a lighter concept of sound, which supplements the diversity of styles on this program. The clear development of themes, as well as variations of style and character, make this piece easily accessible to audiences.

Hidas Frigyes—*Fantasia for Trombone* (1977)

Hidas Frigyes was born in Budapest in 1928 and died there in 2007. He studied at the Liszt Academy of Music from 1947 to 1952, after which he worked as a conductor for the National Theatre in Hungary and as an orchestral pianist. Overall, many of his compositions incorporate jazz elements into Baroque forms and are loosely aligned with the folk song tradition of Kodály and Bartók. During the course of his career, Hidas was

fortunate to have been surrounded by many virtuosic Hungarian wind instrumentalists for which he wrote concerti and other solo works.¹¹

Hidas's *Fantasia* for trombone was written in 1977.¹² *Fantasia* is based around the key of B-flat major and features a condensed Sonata-Allegro form. The main theme of the work is presented in the opening statement: an ascending arpeggiated gesture followed by a skip that resolves with a descending half-step. The half-step figure is developed by inversion, intervallic augmentation, and sequencing throughout the piece. Measures 3 and 4 consist of several descending half-step figures and are used to connect the main theme to its restatement an augmented fifth lower with a sextuplet variation. Hidas develops the arpeggiated theme until measure 31 where the half-step motive is inverted to an ascending whole step. Next, there is a distinct break in style: dotted rhythms combined with ascending half-steps are used to retransition to the opening theme. The recapitulation begins on B-flat but varies from the beginning with a descending half-step sequence in diminution after the second statement of the theme, leading the tonal center to the dominant. The remaining seven measures act as a coda, emphasizing the dominant with descending half step approaches to F. The tension created by the dominant is resolved in the last measure with a B-flat arpeggio.

Fantasia was chosen for this recital because it is an unaccompanied work written with Hungarian inflections, such as the use of the Hungarian minor scale (a harmonic

¹¹ Anna Dalos and György Kroó, "Hidas, Frigyes," *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001), accessed January 9, 2019, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.uni.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000012992>.

¹² *Ibid.*

minor scale with a raised fourth scale degree). The exotic scales in the piece create a contrast with the other repertoire on this program, which is all from Western Europe. The piece challenges the performer's capabilities of musical expression and phrasing. No tempo indication is given, allowing the performer to take liberties regarding time and phrasing. However, many phrase patterns are repeated in the piece, and it can be difficult to vary the expression for each. Hidas has clearly marked his dynamic intentions, but more melodic shaping can be done to create contrasts in character between different phrases.

Many solo instrumental works of the twentieth century employ extended techniques in an attempt to exploit the unique qualities of each instrument. Interestingly, Hidas does not take advantage of the trombone slide in *Fantasia*, as do many twentieth-century composers, but he does recognize the instrument's capabilities by writing harmonic glissandos. The harmonic series allows for the glissandos to be played in a single slide position and are gestural rather than precise, meaning the performer should aim for the highest note of each gliss and cleanly but quickly slur through the sextuplets contained in each passage. The prevalence of half-step intervals and wide intervallic leaps throughout the piece also challenges the performer. Intervals of a half-step pose intonation challenges because slide positions are relative to each other, unlike valves or keys on other instruments.

Heinrich Schütz—“Attendite, Popule Meus,” SWV 270,
from *Symphoniae Sacrae I*, Op. 6 (1629)

“Attendite, Popule Meus” is the fourteenth piece of Heinrich Schütz’s (1585-1672) *Symphoniae Sacrae I*, a collection of twenty sacred pieces for voice and small ensemble that was a product of Schütz’s second visit to Italy.¹³ Each piece in *Symphoniae Sacrae* is a self-contained work that was intended to supplement the liturgy and coincide with the scripture readings for days in the liturgical year.¹⁴

“Attendite, Popule Meus” is written for four trombones, bass vocalist, and basso continuo. The text is taken from Psalm 77: 1-3 (Vulgate). The piece is divided into four main sections: an opening sinfonia for trombones and continuo, a vocal section with trombone obbligato, a second sinfonia, and a second vocal section with solo trombone obbligato followed by a concluding tutti section. Each section explores different tonal centers through contrapuntal imitation but always begins and ends in the key of F major.

As a whole, the piece has a joyful and hopeful character with its ascending intervallic leaps. Schütz creatively uses dissonances to produce darker and even humorous effects. For example, in measure forty-three, the melody modulates to E-flat starting on the text *legem meam* (my law). This modulation is a little jolting to the listener and right after, the text *incline aurem vestram* is sung as a verbal reminder to do what

¹³ Joshua Rifkin, et al. "Schütz, Heinrich," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001), accessed March 28, 2019, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000045997>.

¹⁴ Siegfried Schmalzriedt, “Forward,” to Heinrich Schütz’s *Symphoniae Sacrae I 1629 Opus 6*, ed. Günter Graulich and Paul Horn, trans. John Coombs, *Stuttgarter Schütz-Ausgabe 7* (Stuttgart, Germany: Carus, 1996), xxv.

the music had already accomplished a few measures earlier—to “incline your ears to the words of my mouth.”

The predominant texture throughout the piece is polyphonic with sections that include imitation. Schütz uses imitative counterpoint throughout the opening *sinfonia*, which also serves as an introduction of the motivic elements used in the vocal text. When the solo voice enters, the trombones tacet and the melody is clearly heard in the monodic texture of voice and continuo. There is a shift in texture at measure sixty-eight when the trombones join the voice on the text *aperiam in parabolis* (open my mouth in parables) after which the trombones are in contrapuntal imitation with the voice. The second *sinfonia* section serves as a transition to the second vocal solo section, where a trombone obbligato imitates the melody. After the first occurrence of the text *et patris nobis narraverunt nobis* (and our fathers told us), no new text is presented. *Narraverunt* is sung with a rapid ascending melisma in sequence to symbolize speech. The entire ensemble imitates this figure to conclude the piece.

“Attendite, Popule Meus” was chosen for this recital because it is one of the earliest Baroque chamber pieces with trombone obbligato. However, the sackbut for which this piece was written would have had a much softer and mellower sound. In order to imitate that sound on modern instruments, this performance includes a trombone ensemble of two small-bore tenors, one large-bore tenor, and one bass trombone. Even with this assortment of instruments all playing softly and with good tone, the resulting dynamic still overpowered the voice. The spatial orientation of the ensemble was shifted so the trombones were parallel to the width of the stage in order to diminish the intensity

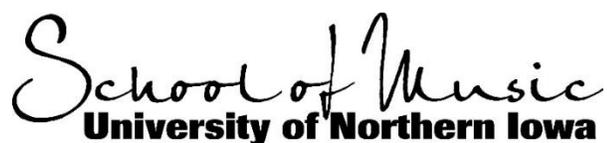
of their sound. The basso continuo had already been realized in the edition, which easily allowed a double bass to be substituted for cello one week before the recital.

Reflections on Recital Preparation

The music on this recital was selected to demonstrate classical trombone performance in a variety of styles and genres from different time periods, as well as to showcase the performer's growth as a musician. The combination of alto trombone, Lieder, French style, solo performance, and Baroque chamber music creates a diverse and entertaining program that avoids stylistic repetitiveness. The performance of two entire concertos, in addition to other repertoire, challenged the performer's stamina and required carefully-planned practice sessions to overcome any physical or mental fatigue. Professional administration skills were necessary in order to coordinate rehearsals for the Schütz. Overall, this recital has taught the performer how to select, prepare, and perform trombone repertoire appropriately and efficiently.

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<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000028080>.



presents

Thomas Mortenson, Trombone
In a Graduate Recital

assisted by:
Natia Shioshvili, piano
Joel Andrews, voice
Clayton Ryan, double bass
Tacet Quartet

In partial fulfillment of the requirement
for the Master of Music degree in Trombone Performance
From the Studio of Dr. Anthony Williams

Concerto for Alto Trombone (c. 1759)
Adagio
Allegro assai

Georg Christoph Wagenseil
(1715-1777)

From *Vier Gesänge* Op. 43 (1857–1864)
Von ewiger Liebe
Die Mainacht

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

Concerto for Trombone and Orchestra (1956)
Andante et Scherzo – Valse
Nocturne
Tambourin

Henri Tomasi
(1901-1971)

INTERMISSION

Fantasia for Trombone (1977)

Hidas Frigyes
(1928-2007)

“Attendite, Popule Meus”
from *Symphoniae Sacrae I* (1629)

Heinrich Schütz
(1585-1672)

Davis Hall, at 8:00 P.M.

Tuesday, March 12, 2019