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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

Obediah Bauer

University of Northern Iowa

May 2020

This Abstract by: Obediah Bauer

Entitled: Master's Recital: Obediah Bauer, 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: Obediah Bauer

Entitled: Master's Recital: Obediah Bauer, Trombone

Date of Recital: March 10, 2020

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

ABSTRACT

Introduction

This recital partially fulfills the requirements for the Master of Music degree in Trombone Performance. Repertoire was chosen to demonstrate a variety of musical and technical facilities in different historical settings. The program features Launy Grøndahl's *Concert Pour Trombone et Piano ou Orchestre*; three movements from Gustav Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* (Songs of a Wayfarer); Enrique Crespo's *Improvisation Nr. 1 für Posaune Solo*; Paul Craven's *Sonatina for Trombone and Piano*; and Ludwig van Beethoven's *Drei Equale für vier Posaunen*.

Launy Grøndahl — *Concert Pour Trombone et Piano ou Orchestre* (1924)

Launy Grøndahl was a Danish composer and conductor born June 30th of 1886. Tutored in violin by Axel Gade and in composition by composer Ludolf Nielsen, Grøndahl started work as a violinist in the Casino Theatre in Copenhagen at the age of twenty. His conducting credits include a 1919 appointment as conductor of the Danish Musical Society, and in 1925 he became the inaugural conductor of what would become the Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra. He held this position until 1956. Grøndahl is especially noted for his interpretations of Carl Nielsen's symphonic works. In addition to this trombone concerto, Grøndahl also composed two string quartets, two other solo concerti, and several orchestral works before his death in 1960.¹

¹ Launy Grøndahl, *Concert Pour Trombone et Piano ou Orchestre* (København: Samfundet til Udgivelse af Dansk Musik, 1992)

Grøndahl's *Concert Pour Trombone et Piano ou Orchestre* was written in 1924 during his musical study in Italy. Dedicated to Vilhelm Aarkrog, the first soloist to perform it, this piece went through several editions. Trombonist Palmer Traulsen (1913-1975) added several interpretive marks to a 1974 edition that was commonly used until the revised 1992 edition removed most of his additions to match the original score. The 1992 version keeps several octave shifts that were added from the 1974 edition but marks them as *ad libitum*.²

This piece is written for tenor trombone and piano and consists of three movements: *Moderato assai ma molto maestoso*, *Quasi una Leggenda – Andante Grave*, and *Finale – Maestoso and Rondo*. The first movement features two prominent melodic motifs in F minor that permeate the concerto in a variety of keys. The beginning features a brief foreshadowing of the first four notes of the first motif before introducing the full melody in the trombone part in measure 2. After a brief move to the subdominant of Bb minor in measure fourteen, the second main motif begins in measure 35 in a starkly different style. These motifs relate in construction by using wide intervals in the first few notes but then move to smaller intervals for the middle and end.

The second movement, *Quasi una Leggenda*, begins with new melodic content strongly influenced by initial tenuto notes of the second motif before referencing the wide intervals of the first movement in measure 13. These wide melodic leaps are primarily perfect fourths and fifths that harken back to the first presentation of perfect fourths and fifths present in the accented notes in the second and third measure of the

² Ibid.

first movement. Additionally, the emphasis on stepwise motion of the first motif in measure 3 onward in the first movement is referenced in this *mosso* melody of the second movement by adding stepwise passing tones between large leaps.

The *Finale – Maestoso and Rondo* moodily morphs the wide intervallic leaps and stepwise content in the opening figure of the trombone line. Instead of using the melodic perfect fourths and fifths present in the other movements, Grøndahl introduces the recitative with a prominent tritone and wide passing intervals. This interval of a tritone - and the harmonic tension that follows - is reinforced not only melodically but also harmonically by the trombone's entrance a tritone above the octave pedal B's in the piano part. The rondo begins somewhat playfully in F minor before utilizing the harmonic tension foreshadowed in the recitative to move to the tonal centers of E minor, D minor, F# minor, and Eb minor. The eventual return to F minor is preceded by a quick trip through Ab major and Db major.

Grøndahl's concerto was selected for this program because it contains unique interpretive challenges for the performer. Placing some articulation mark on nearly every note, Grøndahl's style of heavy notation can feel overwhelming to the performer at the beginning of study. While the composer provides ample opportunities for the performer to freely interpret in several rubato, cantabile, and recitative sections, it can be difficult to balance this freedom of interpretation with the intense specificity that Grøndahl asks for in the rest of the piece.

Gustav Mahler —*Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* (1884)

Gustav Mahler was an Austrian composer and conductor born July 7th of 1860. The son of a soap-maker and tavern proprietor, Mahler's musical education began in Vienna in 1875. During this time, he made friends with contemporaries Hugo Wolf, Hans Rott, Rudolf Krzyzanowski and Anton Krisper. After Mahler's graduation from Vienna University in 1880, he pursued a conducting career which, over the course of three years, led him across the territories of the Austro-Hungarian empire. He eventually signed a contract in Kassel in 1883 that led to his first professionally-performed composition.³

The end of his time in Kassel was marked by an unhappy love affair with vocalist Johanna Richter. The emotionally charged narrative arc of this relationship instigated him to write the poetry and music to *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*, of which this recital contains three of the four movements. Translated as *Songs of a Wayfarer*, the lyrics of this work tell a story of the wayfarer's struggle to deal with the grief of losing his loved one to another.⁴

The first movement, *Wenn mein Schatz Hochzeit macht*, establishes this theme by describing the wayfarer's mourning on the day of his darling's joyous wedding. This theme is reinforced harmonically by the slow and deliberate presentation of melodic material in minor tonalities throughout the entire movement. The joyous wedding day

³ Peter Franklin, "Mahler, Gustav," *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001), accessed April 13, 2019, <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.uni.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000040696?rskey=VwXi7R>.

⁴Ibid.

presents itself in the midst of the wayfarer's grief with a section in Eb major that uses a gently lilting 6/8 meter beginning in measure 44. The wayfarer can only focus on his own grief and sorrow by returning to the initial thematic material in D minor in measure 64. These tonal shifts are poignantly emphasized with the lyrics: "All singing must now be done. At night when I go to sleep, I think of my sorrow, of my sorrow!"

The second movement, *Ging heut' morgen übers Feld*, while omitted from the recital due to time constraints, fits within the narrative arc by describing the wayfarer's journey away from the relationship and his futile attempts at a positive outlook. While the generally major tonalities and serene accompaniment at the beginning provide a pleasing contrast to the first movement, the lyrical story ends in the same emotive place that the first movement ended: grief and sorrow. This is especially evident with the defeatist lyrics: "Now will my happiness also begin? No, no – the happiness I mean can never bloom!"

In the third movement, *Ich Hab' ein glühend Messer*, Mahler creates a departure for the wayfarer by allowing the character to express the details of his strife rather than simply stating his pain. This is exemplified first with the return to the D minor tonality, linking the grief and strife with elements of the first movement. The descriptive nature of grief is further evoked with the stylistic marking of "stormy, wild" and the dramatic change to shorter articulations that accompany the lyrics "I have a red-hot knife, a knife in my breast." Also present are wider and quicker dynamic fluctuations that further underscore the descriptive drama. Examples of this include a one measure crescendo

from piano to forte in measure 5 and a decrescendo from forte to pianississimo in measures 40 and 41.⁵

After the ominous ending lyrics “Would that I lay on my black bier – would that I could never again open my eyes!” that conclude the third movement, the fourth movement, *Die zwei laumen Augen von meinem Schatz*, shows signs of the wayfarer’s acceptance of his ill-fated romantic journey. With a last dramatic flair of “Farewell! My companions are love and sorrow!” the last section of the movement describes the peace the wayfarer finds underneath a linden tree.

While the linden tree has varied significance in Germanic mythology, in this context it relates especially well to the Gerichslinde and its associations with peace and resolution. This is evident in the final stanza: “On the road there stands a linden tree, and there for the first time I found rest in sleep! Under the linden tree that snowed its blossoms onto me – I did not know how life went on, and all was well again! All! All, love and sorrow and world and dream!”

These concepts of peace and resolution are harmonically reinforced by staying in mostly minor tonalities until the entrance of the final stanza in measure forty. As the wayfarer begins to describe the linden tree, the harmony centers around a mostly stable tonality of F major. The final few measures of the piano part include a tag in F minor, posing an unanswered question to the listener: is the rest that the wayfarer found at the

⁵ Gustav Mahler, “Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen, Songs of a Wayfarer,” trans. Douglas Sparkes (Vancouver: Cherry Classics Music, 2000), page 4.

end of this poem from finding his black bier under the linden tree, or is it simply a peaceful sleep?

An instrumental adaptation of a vocal work with such a strong narrative introduces unique challenges to the performer. Without text explicitly given to the audience, the trombonist has to choose between phrasing as if the text shouldn't be interrupted (such as avoiding breaths in between syllables of a single word) or dispensing with the exact placement of the words altogether and trying to provide an interpretation that isn't chained to programmatic ties. Leaving the text behind also provides different articulative opportunities to the instrumentalist who doesn't have to worry about enunciating consonants. In addition, the trombone in particular can make excellent use of the vocal repertoire due to its ability to mimic many vocal idioms (such as portamento) with the slide.

Enrique Crespo —*Improvisation Nr. 1 fur Posaune Solo* (1983)

A native of Montevideo Uruguay, Enrique Crespo is a noted composer, arranger, conductor, and trombonist who studied architecture and music in Buenos Aires and Berlin. In addition to holding professional jobs as a soloist and orchestral trombonist in Argentina and Germany, Crespo arranged and composed for a variety of film, television, and record productions with the Bavarian Broadcasting Company. In 1974 he founded the German Brass Quintet, which would eventually become a double quintet entitled German Brass. This ensemble has produced over twenty compact discs and regularly

tours the world. In addition to classical music, Crespo also composes and arranges in styles such as jazz, folk, and popular music from Latin and South America.⁶

Improvisation Nr. 1 is performed without accompaniment and features two primary motives that permeate the piece. At the very beginning, the trombonist is asked to start with a held note that accentuates a narrow slide vibrato that gradually widens before introducing two of the most important gestures of the piece. The first gesture consists of six chromatic sixteenth - notes before two wide leaps of a diminished fourth and a minor sixth. This gesture is only repeated back-to-back at the beginning (measures 2 and 3) and at the end (measures 81 and 82). Otherwise, this first gesture is used in a single repetition functioning as motivic connecting material.

The second gesture consists of a series of ascending fourths separated by a descending third. This appears first as a snippet in the fourth measure but is expanded gradually throughout, most notably in measures 9, 25, 28, and in the final four bars. The intervallic material is repurposed on the second page in a new 7/8 section that contrasts with the mostly free material by providing the first real “groove” of the piece. The opening statement is comprised almost entirely of fourths before repeating the same syncopated rhythmic pattern and altering the tonality.⁷

This piece also utilizes a variety of extended techniques unique to the slide trombone. A quick run of triplet sixteenth notes is featured in the sixth measure, which

⁶ Natalia Crespo-Gulewicz, “Enrique Crespo - BRASS ACADEMY” (Enrique Crespo Brass Academy, 2020), Accessed April 16, 2020, <http://www.brass-academy.de/deutsch/montevideo/dozenten/dozenten.html>.

⁷ Enrique Crespo, “Improvisation Nr. 1 für Posaune Solo” (Leinfelden-Echterdingen: Lydke Musikverlag, 1983), page 2.

takes advantage of the trombone's ability to use a natural slur. This is accomplished by choosing a cluster of notes higher in the harmonic series and moving the slide in the opposite direction of the line to create a natural articulation. A variety of glissandi are also used, notably in measures 5, 11, and 14. The Doppler-like effects of the slide vibrato persist on the second page while the use of the natural slur is further emphasized in measures 34 and 35. These garish natural slurs are possible due to the closeness of the partials encountered in the harmonic series at the top of the trombone's range. Because the pitches are so close together, this particular note can be accessed in every position. The variety of extended techniques and unaccompanied nature of this piece provide unique technical and expressive challenges to the performer while contributing to a stylistically diverse program.

Paul Cravens — *Sonatina for Trombone and Piano* (2011)

Born on November 3rd of 1989, Paul Cravens was raised in Minnesota and is currently a full-time composer, brass player, pianist and church musician. Beginning his undergraduate compositional studies at Concordia College (Moorhead, Minnesota) with Daniel Breedon and Steven Makela, he continued his musical education at the University of New Hampshire where he received his Master's degree in composition as a student of Dr. Andrew Boysen, Jr. After graduation, Cravens returned to Minnesota where he has been working as a freelance composer and church musician.

Before *Sonatina for Trombone and Piano*, commissioned by the performer, Cravens had only written pieces for the sake of exploring theoretical devices. This was his first commissioned work and the first written with the intent of performance. When

asked about this, Cravens said: “The fact that [Obediah Bauer] asked me to write for him, it got performed, and people loved it was a huge motivator for me at the beginning of my compositional career.”⁸ As a result of the success of this piece, Cravens pursued brass chamber music and wind ensemble literature with future works such as *Tetra*, *March the Eighteenth*, *Benediction*, *Gratitude*, and *Elegy for a Joyful Heart*.

The form of *Sonatina for Trombone and Piano* shows signs of Cravens’s early fascination with the inherent balance of palindromes. The five main sections that start in measures 1, 57, 154, 181, and 195 alternate between heroic and romantic stylings that are in the same order when reversed (heroic, romantic, heroic, romantic, heroic). Cravens has confirmed that although this was unintentional at the time, he pursued this structure on a more formal conscious basis in future works such as *Symphony No. 1* (2016).

At the time *Sonatina for Trombone and Piano* was composed, Cravens was vehemently against programmatic music and instead chose to focus on the strengths and idiomatic nature of the trombone and piano. The soaring brass lines floating over the florid piano writing result in neo-romantic textures that the composer credits as “inspired by Eric Ewazen’s Sonatas.” The premier performance of *Sonatina for Trombone and Piano* was in a masterclass with Grammy award winning trombonist and conductor Henry Charles Smith who called it: “... a terrific recital piece that would rival most French conservatory pieces.”⁹

⁸ Paul Cravens, interview by author, Cedar Falls, Iowa, February 2020.

⁹ Ibid.

Ludwig van Beethoven —*Drei Equale für vier Posaunen* (1812)

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) was a German composer and performer who was among the dominant musical figures of the nineteenth century. The year *Drei Equale für vier Posaunen* was written held many trials for Beethoven: his failure to enforce his reproach of his brother Johann's mistress and eventual wife Therese Obermeyer, his especially emotional letter to 'Immortal Beloved,' and his continued travels to address his health issues. These issues contributed to a long period of reduced creativity in Beethoven's life that could have been influenced by possible depression.¹⁰

The equali were written as short chordal pieces to be played at a funeral. Beethoven wrote the equali while staying with Franz Xaver Glöggl in Linz on All Souls' Day. According to the memoirs of Franz Xaver Glöggl's son, Beethoven wrote these equali for six trombones. Scholars have disagreed about whether the son's memory was faulty, or whether there could be lost equali yet to be discovered.. Glöggl additionally clarifies how the equali functioned as funeral pieces: the first equale announcing the arrival of the clergy, the second equale announcing the funeral procession, and final equale occurring after the consecration and the general prayer. At the end of Beethoven's life, two of these equali were arranged for voices and performed as a processional that alternated with the *Miserere*.¹¹

¹⁰ Joseph Kerman, Alan Tyson, Scott G. Burnham, Douglas Johnson and William Drabkin, "Beethoven, Ludwig van," *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2001), accessed April 13, 2020, <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.uni.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000040026?rskey=gKeZ2a&result=1>.

¹¹ Howard Weiner, "Beethoven's Equali (WoO 30): A New Perspective," *Historic Brass Society Journal* vol. 14 (2002): 215-77, accessed April 23, 2020, https://www.historicbrass.org/edocman/hbj-2002/HBSJ_2002_JL01_010_Weiner_Divided1.pdf

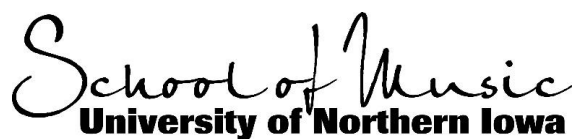
Drei Equale fur vier Posaunen is performed on this recital using atypical trombone quartet instrumentation: alto, small-bore tenor trombone, large-bore tenor trombone, and bass trombone. This provides a greater variety of timbre and creates an ensemble sound that would be more idiomatic to the era compared to the modern-day trombone quartet of three tenor trombones and one bass trombone. This change in sound concept, compared to the rest of the recital, helps the program to end on a satisfying note. The brevity of the three movements - *Andante*, *Poco Adagio*, and *Poco sostenuto* - balances out the longer works such as *Improvisation Nr. 1*, while maintaining a high standard of harmonic and melodic mastery. The principal part is performed on alto trombone, which provides a melodic and timbral contrast to other repertoire on this program. Several challenges are presented to the performer in this change of instruments, such as different slide positions that make it more difficult to play in tune. After playing the rest of the program on tenor trombone, it can also be difficult for the performer not to “overblow” the alto trombone, which would give way to an uncentered tone and even more intonation issues. The performer must accentuate technical and musical adaptability to adjust sound concepts and perform this piece last on the program.

Reflections on Recital Preparation

This recital was prepared to expand upon and demonstrate musical finesse in a variety of genres and historical styles. The inclusion of a full concerto from the standard repertoire in addition to Lieder, a modern accompanied piece, a contemporary neo-romantic piece, and a chamber music work showcase the trombone in a variety of settings, creating an engaging program. The musical decisions required to collaborate with others on complex works challenged the performer to communicate intentions with clarity and show adaptability to the other performer's intentions. In conclusion, this recital not only enlightened the performer in how to prepare and perform trombone repertoire effectively, but it also expanded the performer's musical perspective through collaborative work.

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presents

Graduate Student Recital
From the Studio of Dr. Anthony Williams

Obediah Bauer, Trombone

assisted by:

Serena Hou, Piano
Collin Krukow, Trombone
Michael Stow, Trombone
Zachary Miller, Bass Trombone

In partial fulfillment of the requirement
for the Master of Music degree in Trombone Performance

Concert Pour Trombone et Piano ou Orchestre (1924) Moderato assai ma molto maestoso Quasi una Leggenda – Andante Grave Finale – Maestoso and Rondo	Launy Grondahl (1715-1777)
Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen (1884) Wenn mein Schatz Hochzeit macht Ich Hab' ein gluhend messer Die zwei blaumen Augen von meinem Schatz	Gustav Mahler (1833-1897)
Improvistation Nr. 1 fur Posaune Solo (1983)	Enrique Crespo (b. 1941)
Brief Intermission	
Sonatina for Trombone and Piano (2011)	Paul Cravens (b. 1989)
Drei Equale fur vier Posaunen (1812) Andante Poco Adagio Poco sostenuto	Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Davis Hall, at 6:00 P.M.

Tuesday, March 10, 2020