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TRUMPET IN THE WIND BAND

MARC REED, COLUMN EDITOR

THE INFLUENCE OF JAZZ AND COMMERCIAL MUSIC IN THE MODERN WIND BAND TRADITION

BY CHIP CROTTS

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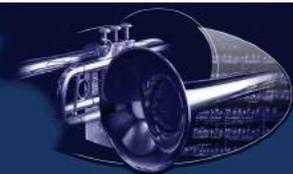
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TRUMPET IN THE WIND BAND

MARC REED, COLUMN EDITOR



Trumpet in the Wind Band examines literature and performance issues associated with the trumpet's role in wind band music throughout music history. Ideas, suggestions, and submissions should be directed to Marc Reed, Fort Lewis College Music Department, 1000 Rim Drive, Durango, CO 81301-3999; windband@trumpetguild.org

THE INFLUENCE OF JAZZ AND COMMERCIAL MUSIC IN THE MODERN WIND BAND TRADITION

BY CHIP CROTTIS

The purpose of this article is to examine the influence of jazz and commercial music on works for wind band, while also delving into trumpet performance practice techniques that can be beneficial to both the music educator and the professional musician.

Excerpt study has been a mainstay in western musical practice for many years, with the majority being taken from the orchestral and wind band genres. While these specific areas have proven successful for trumpeters in practice, there is a third set of excerpts that fall within the realm of the wind band repertoire, but is significantly influenced by jazz and other commercial styles of music. Composers are constantly stretching the boundaries of technique and musicianship, while modern trumpet playing also demands us to speak fluently in many musical styles and genres. I hope this article will inspire a more sincere interest in these works and their uniquely demanding trumpet parts.

The list of excerpts presented here is by no means exhaustive; however, I have chosen specific examples that demonstrate important techniques needed for versatility as a trumpet player. Each excerpt will be discussed from standpoints of per-

formance practice and overall approach to style. Specific areas of performance that will be addressed include: jazz style interpretation, articulation methods, ballad-style performance, performing as a “lead player,” and developing listening skills across the ensemble.

I hope to raise awareness of these works with the intent that students and teachers alike will see the benefits in applying them to their own musical development. By narrowing the perceived gap between “classical” and “commercial” trumpet playing, performers can gain a heightened level of musicianship that will serve them well as professional musicians and educators in today's competitive musical world.

Fugue and Riffs (1949) by Leonard Bernstein

The first excerpt (Example 1) from Leonard Bernstein's *Fugue and Riffs* is soloistic in nature and carries the primary motif of the movement through to the end of the piece. While the sixteenth note dominates the rhythm of this excerpt, special attention should be paid to the accented eighth notes in each measure. The accents should be applied by using more of a breath-weight versus tongue-weight. Breath accents are a

Example 1: 1st trumpet part of Bernstein's *Prelude Fugue and Riffs*, Riffs, mm. 273 – 278. Boosey & Hawkes, 1949.

24

31

mf

Example 2: 1st trumpet part of Wilson's *Shakata: Singing the World into Existence*, mm. 24 – 31. Ludwing Music Inc., 1989.

wonderful way to achieve properly weighted notes, while not causing distortion or over-articulation that can be accompanied by harshly tongued accents. Using this approach will also help provide the necessary swing feel as the music changes from sixteenth to eighth notes. This excerpt also presents intervallic challenges, specifically in measure 276, where the trumpeter leaps to A natural and C natural, as well as in the final descending two note passage from B natural to E natural. Strive to keep the air fast and articulation light as you ascend and drive through the downward leaps.

One of the most unique aspects of this piece is that while it was written without any true improvisation, the approach and compositional style demands that the aural impression left

with the listener is that the riffs are being played spontaneously. By keeping this in mind, one can further understand the value and challenge that a piece like this may present.

Shakata: Singing the World into Existence
(1989) by Dana Wilson

Dana Wilson's *Shakata* (Example 2), from measures 24 – 30 of the first trumpet part, focuses on the initial statement of the primary motif. This motif, providing a sense of improvisation and spontaneity, is passed around the ensemble from section to section. This material also carries some characteristics of a B-flat blues scale, which further enhances the sound and style of the piece throughout.

47 Solo

52

57

62

p *espress.* *mp* *p* *cresc.* *mf* *mp* *cresc.*

mf *f* *dim.* *mp* *mf* *pp* *mp*

p *cresc.* *mp* *cresc.* *f* *dim.*

mp *mf*

Example 3: 1st trumpet part of Grantham's *Bum's Rush*, mm. 47 – 62. Piquant Press, 1994.

Much like the Bernstein example, the passage is dominated by sixteenth note rhythms, with a strong focus on intervallic jumps and phrasing. This excerpt must be played with lightness and a very fast airstream in the upper register in order to accurately execute the two-octave range. From a rhythmic standpoint, focus on tempo and evenness of the sixteenth notes and strive for absolute clarity. The challenge lies with having the needed flexibility to execute the passage and also the ability to sound free and effortless in the process. Articulation style is very important, so make sure the phrases with staccato markings are properly articulated. This will also help to setup the correct feel of the sixteenth note bop-type lines. Overall, the style of this excerpt should be light and bouncy, with a focus on rhythmic vitality and fluidity throughout all registers.

Bum's Rush (1994) by Donald Grantham

Bum's Rush, written in 1994 by Donald Grantham, brings to memory the *film noir* period of the 1940s, and figures such as Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler. This work, dark in nature, is filled with blues and jazz materials that help paint a musically evocative portrait of life in 1940s Los Angeles.

Measures 47 – 62 of the piece (Example 3) present a beautifully haunting trumpet solo. Much like a great jazz ballad, this excerpt should be approached very gently, yet expressively, making good use of all the written inflection and dynamics. The upward glissandi, found in measures 52 – 53 and 60 – 61, require special attention and may be done either chromatically or using a half-valve technique, which mimics the sound of someone crying out when done correctly. From a technical standpoint, there are several intervallic challenges that can interfere with the smoothness of the solo; the importance of pre-hearing these statements cannot be overstated. Pay very close rhythmic attention to the eighth and quarter note triplet

passages, especially the syncopated statements in measures 51, 59, and 61. From a dynamic standpoint, this solo is widely expressive, and should be interpreted correctly to help give the proper emotional range needed for a successful performance. A sense of freedom, similar to a jazz ballad, should be portrayed, yet time and rhythm must remain intact. Flexibility of tempo may also be required to adhere to the musical wishes of individual conductors, so be prepared. This is perhaps one of the most beautiful and striking trumpet solos in the wind band repertoire, and merits study for its sheer beauty and sensitivity.

J'ai ete au bal (1999) by Donald Grantham

In keeping with Grantham's penchant for folk ideas, *J'ai ete au bal* draws its influence from New Orleans. Much like the Crescent City itself, this piece reveals a blend of dance forms, including the waltz, as well as a wide mix of popular styles such as the blues and zydeco.

Measures 146 – 159 (Example 4) come from the initial shout-section of the piece. This motif is initially introduced by the tuba and should be matched to its style. The overall style is similar to that of a big band shout section, with the first trumpet part leading the ensemble in musical direction. For correct interpretation, the eighth notes should be swung throughout, but attention should be paid to the written accents. Grantham is very specific with his articulations, and usually notates exactly what he desires at any point in a given piece. While one may take liberties with the style, be prepared to play exactly what is on the printed page if requested to do so. Maintaining a consistent approach throughout the excerpt is crucial to the overall success of the ensemble in this passage.

Paganini in Metropolis (2002) by Frank Pronto

Our last excerpt (Example 5) is taken from Pronto's *Paganini in Metropolis* (m. 194 – 217). In a typical jazz ensemble setting,

Example 4: 1st trumpet part of Grantham's *J'ai ete au bal*, mm. 146 – 159. Piquant Press, 1999.

SELECTED LIST OF JAZZ & COMMERCIAL INFLUENCED WIND BAND REPERTOIRE

Bernstein, Leonard. *Prelude, Fugue and Riffs* (1949)
 Colgrass, Michael. *Urban Requiem* (1995)
 Colgrass, Michael. *Winds of Nagual* (1985)
 Daugherty, Michael. *Bells for Stokowski* (2002)
 Daugherty, Michael. *Desi* (1991)
 Daugherty, Michael. *Niagara Falls* (1997)
 Daugherty, Michael. *Red Cape Tango* (1999)
 Gershwin, George. *Rhapsody in Blue* (1924)
 Gorb, Adam. *Awayday* (1996)
 Grantham, Donald. *Bum's Rush* (1994)
 Grantham, Donald. *Fayetteville Bop* (2002)
 Grantham, Donald. *J'ai ete au bal* (1999)
 Grantham, Donald. *Southern Harmony* (1998)
 Harbison, John. *Three City Blocks* (1993)
 Hazo, Samuel. *Ride* (2003)
 Mackey, John. *Asphalt Cocktail* (2009)
 Mackey, John. *Kingfisher's Catch Fire* (2007)

Mackey, John. *Redline Tango* (2004)
 Mercy, Robert. *A Jazz Suite* (1961)
 Montenegro, Hugh. *Fanfare for the New* (1950)
 Newman, Jonathan. *My Hands Are A City* (2008)
 Proto, Frank. *Paganini in Metropolis* (2001)
 Reynold, Verne. *Scenes Revisited* (1977)
 Schuller, Gunther. *Symphony for Brass and Percussion*, Op. 16 (1950)
 Stravinsky, Igor. *Ebony Concerto* (1945)
 Syler, James. *Storyville* (1996)
 Ticheli, Frank. *Angels in the Architecture* (2009)
 Ticheli, Frank. *Blue Shades* (1997)
 Wilson, Dana. *Piece of Mind* (1987)
 Wilson, Dana. *Shakata: Singing the World Into Existence* (1989)
 Whitacre, Eric. *Ghost Train* (1995)
 Whitacre, Eric. *Godzilla Eats Las Vegas* (1996)

the lead trumpet and drummer are responsible for time, dynamics, and dictating the style of a piece. *Metropolis* is no different. The first trumpet must be in sync with the drum set, and correct interpretation between both players is crucial for the overall success of the ensemble. Pay careful attention to rhythmic integrity on the off beats and half note triplet figures in measures 201 – 203 and 208 – 209, where the slightest shift of time between the two timekeepers can have an adverse effect on the feel of the ensemble. From a range standpoint, this piece requires a solid high E natural and G natural in measures 204 – 207, and should be played with great authority, albeit

with control and finesse. In reality, this type of playing has become increasingly more common in orchestral settings, and pops concerts often require the services of a strong lead player. From a marketability standpoint, developing lead trumpet skills can be both beneficial and profitable in the long run.

What's Next?

The influence of jazz, commercial, and popular musical styles are becoming more prevalent in wind band writing of the 21st century, and composers are continuously pushing the

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Example 5: 1st trumpet part of Proto's *Paganini in Metropolis*, mm. 194 – 217. Liben Music Publishers, 2001.

musical and technical boundaries of all musicians in the process. It is my sincere hope that the examples given here have shown a need to better understand and appreciate these styles of music and the importance of adding them to your playing arsenal. By developing a clearer stylistic approach to these types of works, trumpeters can strengthen their musicianship and marketability in today's ever-changing trumpet world.

"...composers are continuously pushing the musical and technical boundaries of all musicians..."

About the author: Chip Crotts is the Director of Jazz Studies at the Georgia Institute of Technology (GT) in Atlanta, Georgia. A Grammy nominated trumpet player, Crotts has toured and performed with artists such as Natalie Cole, Ray Charles, Boston Brass, the Temptations, and Maynard Ferguson. Chip holds degrees from East Carolina University, Penn State University, and the DMA in Jazz Emphasis from the University of Texas at Austin. Chip is a Yamaha Performing Artist and Clinician.

