THE HISTORY OF THE TROMBONE FROM THE RENAISSANCE TO THE EARLY ROMANTIC PERIOD

THESIS

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by

211818
Richard Highfill, B. Mus.

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PREFACE

The purpose of this thesis is to show the development of the trombone, in form and music, and its use in the orchestra through the times of Beethoven and Schubert. Since very little material has been presented concerning the history of the trombone, it is hoped that the illustrations and explanations contained herein will be a contribution toward a representation of music from different composers and periods. The music covered gives a picture of the use of the trombone from the Renaissance through to the beginning of the Romantic Period. The results of this study are presented in three main sections: (1) The history of the trombone in the Renaissance; (2) The history of the trombone in the Baroque; (3) The history of the trombone in the Classical Period, and up to the time of Schubert.

In the first section, the trombone is described in its original form and illustrations show its use in the music of the Renaissance.

The use of the trombone in the Baroque era, and its place in the various forms of sacred and secular music are presented in the second section.

The third section is concerned mainly with the further development of the trombone in orchestral literature,
culminating with the introduction and establishment of the instrument in the symphony.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. THE HISTORY OF THE TROMBONE TO THE END OF THE RENAISSANCE</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. THE HISTORY OF THE TROMBONE IN THE BAROQUE ERA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE HISTORY OF THE TROMBONE THROUGH THE CLASSICAL AND EARLY ROMANTIC PERIODS</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| BIBLIOGRAPHY                                             | 76   |
# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Illustration Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Partials Produced on the Modern Trombone</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Range of the Trombone</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Position of f' in First, Fourth, and Sixth Positions</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Guillaume Dufay's <em>Gloria ad modum tubae</em>, Showing the &quot;Hocket&quot; Effect</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Antonius Romanus Motet, <em>Stirps Mocenigo</em></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Giovanni Gabrieli, <em>Sonate pian e forte</em></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Crazio Benevoli, <em>Festmesse und Hymnus</em></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Heinrich Schutz, &quot;Ist Nicht Ephraim mein theurer Sohn&quot;</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Schutz, &quot;Attendite, popule meus, legem meam&quot;</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Schutz, &quot;Domine, labia mea aperies&quot;</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Schutz, &quot;Veni, diletce me, ihortum meum&quot;</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Schutz, &quot;150th Psalm&quot;</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Schutz, &quot;150th Psalm&quot;</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Andreas Hammerschmidt, &quot;No. III, Dialogus a 3&quot;</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Andreas Hammerschmidt, &quot;No. VI, Dialogus a 2&quot;</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Johann Pezel, <em>Turmsionate</em></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Johann Pezel, &quot;Intrade (No 13)&quot;</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Antonio Draghi, &quot;Missa Assumptionia,&quot; <em>Kirchenwerke</em></td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Draghi, &quot;Gloria in excelsis Deo,&quot; <em>Kirchenwerke</em></td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>Draghi, &quot;Credo in unum Deum,&quot; <em>Kirchenwerke</em></td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Draghi, &quot;Credo in unum Deum,&quot; <em>Kirchenwerke</em></td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Buxtehude, &quot;Ihr lieben Christen, freut euch nun,&quot; <em>Abendmusiken und Kirchenkantaten</em></td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Gottfried Reiche, &quot;Turmsonate fur 4 Blasinstrumente&quot;</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Johann Joseph Fux, <em>Mass</em></td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Fux, <em>Sonato o Quatro</em></td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Johann Sebastian Bach, <em>Cantate 2</em></td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Bach, <em>Cantata 25</em></td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Handel, &quot;Dead March,&quot; <em>Saul</em></td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Handel, &quot;Moses Gesang,&quot; <em>Israel in Egypt</em></td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Gluck, <em>Orfeo ed Euridice</em></td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Gluck, <em>Orfeo ed Euridice</em></td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Franz Joseph Haydn, <em>Die Jahreszeiten</em></td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>W. A. Mozart, <em>Don Giovanni</em></td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Mozart, <em>Die Zauberflote</em></td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Mozart, &quot;Tuba mirum,&quot; <em>Requiem</em></td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Mozart, <em>Requiem</em></td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Beethoven, <em>Symphony No. 5</em></td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Beethoven, <em>Symphony No. 2</em></td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Beethoven, <em>Symphony No. 5</em></td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Beethoven, Overture to the Opera <em>Fidelio</em> (Leonore No. 3)</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Beethoven, <em>Mass</em> (Missa Solemnis)</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Beethoven, <em>Three Equali</em> for Four Trombones, No. 1</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>Page</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beethoven, Three Equali for Four Trombones, No. 2</td>
<td>66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beethoven, Three Equali for Four Trombones, No. 3</td>
<td>66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franz Schubert, Symphony in B minor</td>
<td>67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schubert, Symphony in B minor</td>
<td>68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schubert, Eine kleine Trauermusik</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schubert, Mass in F</td>
<td>71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schubert, Anhang I</td>
<td>72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schubert, Zur Feier des heiligen Opfers der Messe nebst einem Anhange: Das Gebet des Herrn</td>
<td>73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schubert, Offertorium</td>
<td>74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

THE HISTORY OF THE TROMBONE TO THE END
OF THE RENAISSANCE

In order to understand the history of any instrument, it is necessary to know something about its mechanism; therefore, the first portion of this chapter will be devoted to acquainting the reader with the mechanics of the trombone.

The trombone is composed of a tube that is cylindro-conoidal in bore with two-thirds of the length cylindrical, one-third conoidal, a bell of medium size, and a cup-shaped mouthpiece.

The tube itself produces the series of partials from BB-flat on the modern or "tenor" trombone.¹

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{trombonepartials.png}
\caption{Partials produced on the modern trombone}
\end{figure}

¹The first partial in this harmonic series is the fundamental BB-flat, and is called a "pedal tone." The other six positions move downward in semitones (i.e., the second position is one-half step lower than the first, or closed position, etc.)
By means of an attached slide of cylindrical tubing, which makes the instrument fold upon itself, the tube length may be increased. Six similar series of partials are possible from A (second position), A-flat (third position), G (fourth position), G-flat (fifth position), F (sixth position), and E (seventh position).

The tenor trombone cannot be made completely chromatic because there is an interval of an augmented fourth between the pedal tone\(^2\) of the first position (BB-flat) and the lowest tone of the seventh position (E) which cannot be filled\(^3\) without the addition of a valve or Quartventil.\(^4\)

When the natural overtones of all the positions are superimposed, a complete chromatic scale from E to b-flat'

\(^2\)"Wind Instruments," \textit{Harvard Dictionary of Music}. "Properly a pipe of given length which produces one tone only, e.g., a pipe of 8 feet in length produces the tone C, of four feet in length the tone c, etc." However, by proper control of the breath and the lips, called "overblowing," a pipe can easily be made to sound not only its normal tone, the "fundamental," but also its higher harmonics. According to this article, it is impossible to play the fundamental (pedal tone) on the trombone; actually, however, it is quite possible to play the fundamental (pedal tone) of each position. Amateurs have very little difficulty in playing BB-flat, AA, and AA-flat.

\(^3\)Nicholas Bessaraboff, \textit{Ancient European Musical Instruments}, pp. 169-172. The author is in error when he states that valved instruments can play chromatically from the pedal tones up; unless, of course, he is discussing the rare four valved instruments instead of the standard three valved instruments. However, he does not make this differentiation.

\(^4\)The Quartventil is a trigger mechanism operated with the thumb of the left hand to extend the playing range downward a perfect fourth.
(Figure 2) becomes possible; above that, capable trombonists can extend the scale up to $f''$ (Figure 2); consequently, the complete range varies from two octaves and a fifth to approximately three octaves.

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**Fig. 2--Range of the trombone**

An important fact in trombone playing is that many of the tones can be played in more than one position. Thus $f'$ can be played as the sixth partial in the first position, the seventh partial in the fourth position, and the eighth partial in the sixth position (Figure 3).

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**Fig. 3--Position of $f'$ in first, fourth, and sixth positions.**

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5 Nicholas Bessaraboff, *Ancient European Musical Instruments*, p. 409, fn. 375. According to the author, this fact was known to Mersenne. (Presumably from the Harmonie Universelle, 1636).

6 A true fourth position $f'$ would be flat in pitch, and it is necessary to sharpen the position slightly by pulling the slide toward third position.
The possibilities of producing the same pitch in two or more positions increase in the upper register of the instrument because there are more tones of which a high tone can be a partial.

The trombonist has an inherent advantage over the players of the valve brass instruments in that he is not dependent upon an imperfect mechanism, but can produce an accurate pitch by a minute adjustment of the slide, just as a string player can by minute adjustments of the hand on the strings.

One of the earliest traceable names given to the medieval form of the instrument (fifteenth century) was the Spanish name **sacabuche**, which in a musical sense means "draw tube," but literally translated means "ship's pump." The French names follow the Spanish very closely: **saquebute**, **sagueboute** ("pull-push"). Finally, the English had their own versions (**shakbusse**, **sagbut**, and eventually **sackbut**) which no doubt came from either the French or Spanish. However, the German follows the line traced to the Latin **buccina**.

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8"Trumpet," *Harvard Dictionary of Music*. The buccina was a Roman trumpet of a circular form which was carried by their armies over Europe. After A.D. 1000, the instrument acquired the shape of a long and slim pipe with a funnel shaped bell. This instrument was called the **buisine** which in German became **busaune**. Ibid.
The term "sackbut" and its cognates and the name "buccina" and variants seem to be applied to the same type of instrument comprising a sectional tube with slide extension and cup mouthpiece.

The exact date when the word "trombone" came into use is not known, but the earliest piece of music in which the word "tromboni" (trombone) occurs is in the Sonate pian e forte (1597) by Giovanni Gabrieli which will be discussed later. The name, which is the augmentative form of "tromba" and means "large trumpet," was probably in use earlier. Another name was the tromba spezzata, or "broken trumpet," referring to the fact that it was constructed in sections and not in one piece of tubing.

However, the name posaune seems to have been in use much earlier than the word tromboni as can be seen in the work Providebam Dominum (1568) by Orlande de Lassus, which will be discussed later. As has been pointed out the names trombone (Italian), posaune (German), and sackbut (English) appear to be synonymous, and therefore, for convenience sake, the name sackbut will be used until the actual appearance of the name "trombone" in the late sixteenth century.

The locale of the development of the sackbut cannot be traced, but there have been speculations as to the country in which it first appeared. Kathleen Schlesinger places the origin of the instrument in the Netherlands or South Germany, if indeed it was not an oriental reimportation of the ancient
buccina through the Arabs. She sets forth this possibility in her discussion of the derivation of the sackbut from the buccina since there was an Arabic trumpet called "buk" or "buque." This instrument is mentioned in a treatise of the fourteenth century as being among the musical instruments then in use in Spain.\(^9\)

There is in an eleventh century psalter at Bologna, a drawing of an instrument which bears a great resemblance to a sackbut deprived of its bell.\(^10\) However, Galpin disputes this by identifying the pictured instrument as being a "fanciful delineation of the sambuke, an ancient four stringed lyre."\(^11\) He further states that the sackbut evolved from the trumpet about the year 1300, and in his book *Old English Instruments of Music*, places the origin of the sackbut in Northern Italy or Southern France, but he gives no evidence to substantiate this claim.\(^12\)

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\(^10\) Kathleen Schlesinger, "Trombone," *Encyclopedia Britannica*. According to Arthur Elson in his book *Orchestral Instruments and Their Use*, there is a reference to musical contrivances that use the slide in the writings on Greek accents, by the Greek grammarian Arcadius (second century, A.D.). Parkhurst and DeBekker in their book *Encyclopedia of Music and Musicians*, p. 609, attribute the invention of the slide to Osiris, and then to Tyrtaeus, in the seventh century, B.C.


\(^12\) F. W. Galpin, *Old English Instruments of Music*, pp. 207-214.
In the development of the sackbut from its original parent, the buccina, a long trumpet, there were at least three processes involved. The busine (buccina), originally made in one piece, came to be made in sections, each overlapping the other to form sliding joints. An example of this instrument was found in miniature executed in South France during the thirteenth century.\textsuperscript{13} The second step was the bending of the tube into three parallel branches like a flattened \textit{S}. An example of this was found on the woodwork of the Abbey of Cluny, dated the thirteenth century.\textsuperscript{14}

Galpin states that the fourteenth century use of the words "sacabuche" and "saquebute" imply the use of the slide, and that there is a representation of the instrument, together with shawms,\textsuperscript{15} on an ivory chessboard in the National Museum at Florence. The instrument is also mentioned as forming a part of an orchestra which played in a

\textsuperscript{13}This miniature is now located at the University of Munich.

\textsuperscript{14}These two miniatures may be seen reproduced in Kathleen Schlesinger's article, "Sackbut," \textit{Encyclopedia Britannica}.

\textsuperscript{15}"Oboe," \textit{Harvard Dictionary of Music}. The early European double reed instruments are referred to collectively as "shawms." They were the predecessors of the modern oboe, English horn, etc.
feast held in Lombardy at the close of the fourteenth century. 16

The third and last transition was the discovery of the double slide, shaped like a U, which was drawn out to lower the pitch. An illustration of an instrument with this development is found in the painting, "The Wedding of the Adimari" (Florence, ca. 1420), 17 and somewhat later in early German translations of Vegetius's De Re Militari (1470) the buccina is described (bk III, 5) as the trumpet or posaun which is drawn in and out showing that the instrument was not only well known, but that it had been identified as the descendant of the buccina. 18

During the fifteenth century in the "Privy purse expenses of Henry VII," there appears the following entry: "1495, May 3. To foure shakbusshe for their wages vii." 19

The sackbut of this period may be seen in pictures of different artists of the fifteenth century. For example, Gentile Bellini's "Procession in Piazza S. Marco" (1496). 20

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17 Heinrich Besseler, Musik Des Mittelmaesters Und Der Renaissance, p. 184. Another illustration of a similar instrument is to be found in a miniature by Taddeo Grivelli in the Borso Bible 1450-1471 (Schlesinger, "Sackbut," op. cit.).


19 F. W. Galpin, Old English Instruments of Music, pp. 207-214. Galpin did not place a monetary figure after "vii."

20 The reproduction of this picture may be seen in the preface of G. Gabrieli's score to Canzoni Septimi Toni as well as in Life's Picture History of Western Man, pp. 114-115.
In Spain, during this period, there was listed among the instruments of Queen Isabella (c. 1500) "one Sacabuche of silver in three pieces ... another sacabuche of silver in two pieces." There are also several woodcuts of the "Triomphe de Maximilian" (1512) by Burgkmair, showing musicians playing sackbuts, and Robert Haas in his Aufführungspraxis has a picture (1556) taken from a treatise by Herman Finck (Musica Practica) showing the instrument being played.

The oldest known sackbut in existence is one made by Jorg Nueschel of Nuremberg, in 1557, who was the son of Hans Nueschel, the most famous player and maker of "posaunen" of the fifteenth century. In fact, he made several trombones for Pope Leo X, and visited Rome where his playing was greatly admired.

The preserved and dated instruments of Jorg Nueschel, Anton Schnitzer (1597), Cunrat Linczer (1587), and

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22 Albert Lavignac, Encyclopédie De La Musique, p. 1199. Another of this series of pictures may be seen in the book Military Music by H. G. Farmer, p. 15. Also reproduced in Militärmusik in Gesichte und Gegenwart by Dr. Peter Panoff, pp. 23, 24, abb. 14 and 16, and in Aufführungspraxis by Robert Haas, p. 125.

23 A reproduction of this instrument may be seen in Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Vol. IV, p. 496, plate LXVIII.

24 Adam Carse, Musical Wind Instruments, pp. 252-253.
Pierre Colbert (1593)\textsuperscript{25} provide evidence that the instrument of some three hundred and fifty or more years ago was in all its essentials a finished product which did not need further improvement.

The early history of performance is obscure. It may be assumed that the instrument was frequently used in the middle ages for doubling or replacing voices. By the fourteenth century, however, it apparently had begun to play an important part in tower music as we shall see later.

Although the earliest known composition calling for certain instruments to play specified parts is the well known \textit{Sonate pian e forte} (1597) by Giovanni Gabrieli, there are several pieces that pre-date this work that use trombone. However, while the instrumentation is known, the exact instrumental assignments have been lost, and we can only speculate as to what instruments play what parts. The earliest of these seems to be Guillaume Dufay's celebrated \textit{Gloria ad modum tubae} from the early fifteenth century.\textsuperscript{26}

Since the two canonic parts for the "tubae"—a generic name at that time for all brass instruments\textsuperscript{27}—are confined to the third, fourth, fifth and sixth partials of the

\textsuperscript{25}Georg Kinsky, \textit{A History of Music in Pictures}, p. 150.

\textsuperscript{26}Guido Adler und Oswald Koller, \textit{Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich} (Sechs Trienter Codices I), Vols. XIV and XV (Jahrgang VII), p. 147.

\textsuperscript{27}Charles van den Borren, \textit{Guillaume Dufay} ... p. 143.
C series, they could be played on the natural trumpet and would not require the trombone with its slide, although Van den Borren thinks the latter the best instrument of the time for rendering the part. It is interesting to note that Dufay used the "hocket" effect in the *Gloria ad modum tubae*.

![Fig. 4--Guillaume Dufay's Gloria ad modum tubae, showing "hocket" effect.](image)

In the case of the Antonius Romanus Motet, *Stirps Mocenigo* (Figure 5), written for the induction of Tommaso Mocenigo as Doge of Venice (1413), the trombones suggested

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28 Charles van den Borren, *Guillaume Dufay* . . . p. 143

29 "Hocket," *Harvard Dictionary of Music*. In medieval polyphony (thirteenth and fourteenth centuries) the truncation of a melodic line into fragments (frequently single notes) which are given to two parts in alternation.
by Schering though not specified in the original, are the only brass instruments of the time that could have played the parts.

Fig. 5--Antonius Romanus Motet, Stirps Mocenigo

Another work pre-dating the Sonate pian e forte is a Copenhagen manuscript of about 1541. This piece, referred to by Haas, is an eight part Laudate dominum calling for "4 zinken und 4 posaunen." 

Massimo Trojano in his Discorsi certifies to the use of the sackbut in his account of the wedding festivities of William V of Bavaria, and Renata of Lorraine in 1568. At the wedding banquet on the 22nd of February of that year,

30Arnold Schering, Geschichte Der Musik In Beispielen, pp. 5 and 23.

31Robert Haas, Aufführungspraxis, p. 135. Unfortunately, this manuscript is not available, according to Haas, ibid.
the Tafelmusik, according to Trojano, included a seven
voice motet by Lassus for 5 cornetti\textsuperscript{32} (Figure 6) and
2 sackbuts, and a six-voice madrigal by Alessandro Striggio
for six large sackbuts of which the bass sounded an octave
lower than the normal sackbut.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{32}Cornett, "Harvard Dictionary of Music. A fifteenth
and sixteenth century instrument in the form of a straight
or slightly bent tube made of wood (or occasionally, of
ivory) with a surface octagonal in cross section, with six
fingerholes and provided with a cup-shaped mouthpiece.

\textsuperscript{33}O. Kinkeldey, Orgel Und Klavier In Der Musik Des 16.
Jahrhunderts, pp. 179-180. Unfortunately, for our purpose,
Kinkeldey uses the German term "posaune" without directly
quoting Trojano. Since Trojano's own work was not available
for this study, the writer cannot say whether Trojano used
the term trombone, as is quite possible.

\textsuperscript{34}Orlande de Lassus, Providebam Dominum, edited by
Robert D. King.
As it has been stated previously, the first known work calling for the trombone to play a specific part, is found in Giovanni Gabrieli's *Sonate pian e forte* (1597). In fact, this work can make claims to two precedences. It was the first piece of instrumental ensemble music to show a detailed indication of the instruments, and it was the first known work to make use of the dynamic contrast between piano and forte. Obviously, Gabrieli thought so much of the latter innovation that he titled this sonata in that manner. For these reasons, this work stands at the beginning of the history of orchestration. The following example gives the original instrumentation and the placement of the instruments.

![Musical notation](image)

*Fig. 7—Giovanni Gabrieli, Sonate pian e forte*

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CHAPTER II

THE HISTORY OF THE TROMBONE

IN THE BAROQUE ERA

In order to fully understand the beginning of the Baroque era in music, it is necessary to consider the composer who more or less bridged the gap between the Renaissance and Baroque periods. This composer, Giovanni Gabrieli, in his later works (composed probably after 1600) was the person who laid the groundwork for the musical innovations of the Baroque composers. While it is true that his works did not make a complete break with the Renaissance style, his later experiments in composition breathed a revolutionary spirit affecting especially the art of orchestration since the later works contained specific directions as to the combination of voices and instruments, directions which are usually lacking in contemporary scores. Several compositions are scored for voices and instrumental ensembles consisting of violins, cornetti, trombones, bassoons, and bass viols in highly coloristic combinations.¹ For example, his Suscipe clementissime has a six-voice chorus opposed to a second choir of six trombones.² The magnificent twelve-voice motet

²Ibid. This score is not available for this study.
In *Ecclesiis*³ calls for an orchestra of three cornetti, viola, and two trombones, and contrasts a full chorus or "cappella" with a solo quartet.

The novel style of Gabrieli inspired but few of his kindred Italian composers to continue in his path. The greatest of these was Claudio Monteverdi.⁴ Gabrieli also influenced the German school through his pupil Heinrich Schütz, who will be discussed later.

Following in the footsteps of Gabrieli, expanding and adding many innovations of his own, Monteverdi combined the "Riforma Melodrammatica," the French "airs de cour," "ballets," and embodied a host of technical details borrowed from the Italian madrigalists and organists, and reached an early peak in his career when he wrote the opera *Orfeo*.⁵

In the listing of instrumentation at the beginning of the opera, Monteverdi calls for "quattro tromboni"; however, in the third act, he lists his instrumentation as follows: "coro di spirito, di un regale, organo di legno, cinque [sic:] tromboni, duoi basso da gamba, e un contrabasso de viola."⁶ In calling for five trombone parts, Monteverdi increases the

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instrumental participation. It is unfortunate that Monteverdi does not call for the trombone to play a specific part, and it is therefore not possible to show a specific example from this work.

Another example of the use of trombones in the orchestra of this period is the balletto La Liberazione Di Ruggiero by Francesca Caccini, daughter of Giulo Caccini, and wife of Giovambattista Signorini Malaspina, both musicians in their own rights. She was approximately forty-four years of age when she completed the music for this work. The balletto was composed in 1625 for the festivities in honor of Wladislaw Sigismund, Prince of Poland, who visited the Medici court from January 26 to February 13, 1625. It is again unfortunate that Francesca Caccini, like Monteverdi, did not specify parts, and it is impossible to show an exact trombone example.

As maestro di cappella to the Vatican, Orazio Benevoli (1602-1672) became especially known for his ability to compose works in which he handled many separate parts. In 1628 he composed a festival mass and a hymn in which he combined fifty-six parts, both vocal and instrumental. In the "Kyrie" of the Mass, he places a special stress on the bass trombone part as is seen in Figure 8.

7 Francesca Caccini, La Liberazione Di Ruggiero, p. 74.

At the beginning of this chapter, the brilliance of Giovanni Gabrieli as a composer was pointed out. His work as a teacher showed the same spark of genius, and it is significant that on his deathbed he bequeathed his signet ring to his prize pupil, Heinrich Schütz.

As one of the titans of the early German Baroque, Heinrich Schütz (1585-1672) returned to Germany in 1612 after the death of Gabrieli to assume the duties of music

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7Orazio Benevoli, "Festmesse und Hymnus," Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich, Band 20 (Jahrgang X/1) p. 7.

10Bukofzer, Music in the Baroque Era, p. 25.
director to the elector of Saxony. In his works, Schütz used the trombones both extensively and effectively. He was especially adept in the use of trombone choirs such as in the motet "Ist nicht Ephraim mein theurer Sohn."  

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\[\text{Fig. 9—Heinrich Schütz, "Ist Nicht Ephraim mein theurer Sohn."}\]

\[\text{11} \text{Nbid., p. 90-91. Bukofzer points out that this is a wonderful example of the musical inspiration that Schütz derived from German speech rhythm.}\]

\[\text{12} \text{Heinrich Schütz, "Ist nicht Ephraim mein theurer Sohn," Sämtliche Werke, p. 89, edited by Philip Spitta. See also:}\]
One of the greatest works by Schütz is the collection of *Symphoniae sacrae* which was written in three volumes (1629, 1647, and 1650).

However, it is Part I, written in 1629, that concerns this study, since the second and third parts are purely vocal.

In the medium of small "concertato" from the *Symphoniae sacrae* Schütz created scenes of great vision, such as the somber plaint of David for Absalom, for bass voice and four trombones, in Part XIV of the *Symphoniae sacrae*. At the beginning, the quartet of trombones intones a sinfonia which anticipates the motive of the voice. (See Figure 10)


Schütz uses the trombone in all of the following works: *Symphoniae sacrae*, Part XIII, "Fili mi, Absalon," Part XIV (Figure 5), Part XV (Figure 5), Part XVIII (Figure 7), Part XIX, "Buccinate in neomenia tuba."
Part XV of the *Symphoniae sacrae* employs a sinfonia for cornetto (o violino), trombone, and fagotto, which gives an insight to the method in which Schütz handled various combinations of instruments. (See Figure 11)
Fig. 11—Heinrich Schütz, "Domine, labia mea aperies".\(^{15}\)

It is in Part XVIII of the *Symphoniae sacrae* that Schütz shows his true ability in weaving a pattern between choirs of instruments and voices. Here he has taken three trombones and used them as a separate chorus and as an accompaniment to the chorus in a masterpiece of creative work (see Figure 12).

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\(^{15}\) Heinrich Schütz, "Domine, labia mea aperies," Part XV of *Symphoniae sacrae*, edited by Philip Spitta, p. 77.
Fig. 12—Schütz, "Veni, dillec te me, ihortum meum." 16

An example showing Gabrieli's influence on Schütz is found in the "150th Psalm" of the Sämtliche Werke, in which he divides the combined chorus and orchestra into two choirs and uses some of the instruments to double the vocal parts (see Figure 13).

Fig. 13--Heinrich Schütz, "150th Psalm"17

17Heinrich Schütz, "Psalm 150," Sämtliche Werke, edited by Philip Spitta, p. 34.
In the same work, he uses the three trombone parts as solo while the chorus sings "lobet ihn mit posaunen." (See Figure 14)
While not considered a great composer, Andreas Hammerschmidt (1611 or 12-1675) must be mentioned for a very special reason. According to J. R. Milne\(^{19}\) it was Hammerschmidt who originated the "Dialogi oder Gespräche zwischen Gott und einer glaubigen Seele" (dialogue between God and a faithful soul. This use of dialogue is generally associated with the church cantata of Johann Sebastian Bach.) Hammerschmidt wrote twenty-two "Dialogues" for two, three, and four parts, using the trombone in eleven of them.\(^{20}\)

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\(^{19}\) "Andreas Hammerschmidt," Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians. Dialogues are texts of prayers or complaints, sung by one or two voices, immediately followed or accompanied by answering texts of promise or comfort, sung by another voice.

\(^{20}\) Reprints may be found in Andreas Hammerschmidt, "Dialogi," Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich, Band 16 (Jahrgang VIII/1).
In No. III, he uses the trombone as accompaniment to Cantus I, II, Bassus, and Basso continuo (see Figure 15).

This is a good example of the trombone parts in the other "Dialogi," with the exception of No. VI which stands out as being relatively difficult (see Figure 16).

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21 Andreas Hammerschmidt, "No. III, Dialogus a 3," Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich, Band 16 (Jahrgang VIII/1), p. 16.

22 Hammerschmidt, "No. VI, Dialogus a 2," ibid., p. 28.
In order to introduce the next type of Baroque music, it is necessary to go back to the fourteenth century. For it was from the fourteenth century through the seventeenth century that there existed, mainly in Germany, a branch of music that did not model its performance after vocal music; tower-music. The thuermer (tower-men who played wind instruments) were retained by most German towns and had varied duties assigned to them. These men, who resided in specially constructed towers or chambers fitted high in church steeples, had to sound a zink at every hour, blow a signal on the horn to warn the citizens of an enemy's approach, and sound the alarm in case of a fire. They also played a sacred song at early dawn and a secular song at mid-day on feast days.23

As time went on, these groups of thuermer acquired more and more duties, which included playing processional music, dance music, and the accompaniments for church chorales. After the reformation, their duties became even more arduous because they had to remind people to pray by performing chorales on trombones and zinken three times a day. Until the middle of the seventeenth century, these bands of thuermer were perhaps the most important exponents of wind-instrument music.24

Still called thuermer, these tower-men eventually assumed the functions of community bands, and supplied accompaniments at church festivities, civic pageants, and dance music for public holidays. After a while "thuermer," came to be called "stadtpfeifer" or "stadtmusicus," and their special tower duties disappeared. 25

One of the most fruitful and active groups was the Leipzig Stadtpfeifferei which produced Johann Pezel (1634-1694). While his personal history is obscure, his name appears in the Leipzig documents for the first time in 1664 where he is mentioned as being a member of the "Kunstgeiger" ("art-fiddlers"). Late in 1669 or early 1670 he joined the stadtpfeifer group in whose company he served until 1681. In that year he went to Bautzen and served in the stadtmusicus group until his death in 1694. With the exception of Gottfried Reiche, who will be discussed later, Pezel is the only stadtpfeifer to publish any compositions.

As far as this study is concerned, the most important group of his compositions were published under the title Musicalische Arbeit zum Abblazen um 10 Uhr Vormittage in Leipzig, 1670 (see Figure 17).

This group of compositions consists of forty sonatas in five parts for two zinken and three trombones. In the preface of this volume, he states that he published this volume at the request of a large number of tower musicians in Germany. He also stated that these sonatas may be played indoors by substituting violins and violas for zinken and trombones. Another Pezel publication for wind instruments is the Funffstimme Blasende Musik (1684) written in five parts for two cornetti and three tromboni (see Figure 18).

26 Arnold Schering, Geschichte der Musik in Beispielen, p. 288.
Fig. 18--Johann Pezel, "Intrade (No 13)"

One of the most prolific composers of this time was Antonio Draghi (1635-1700) who was the Court Theatre Intendant to Emperor Leopold I and Kapellmeister to the Empress Eleonore at Vienna. During his thirty-eight years of court life, he had performed sixty-seven operas, one hundred and sixteen feste teatrali and serenades, thirty-seven oratorios, besides hymns, and cantatas, etc. Draghi's most important contribution to the use of the trombone comes from his Kirchenwerke written in 1684 (see Figure 19).

In the "Gloria in excelsis Deo" of the same work, the trombone parts appear to be very difficult. Even though the tempo might be slow, it would afford some technical difficulty (see Figure 20).

29 Antonio Draghi, "Kirchenwerke," Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich, Band 46 (Jahrgang XXIII/1), p. 46.
In the "Credo in unum Deum" Draghi utilizes the trombones in two trombone quartet solos of which the second appears in the following example (see Figure 21).

Fig. 20--Antonio Draghi, "Gloria in excelsis Deo," Kirchenwerke. 30

Ibid., p. 23.
During the year 1668, Dietrich Buxtehude (1637-1707) attained the post of organist at the Marienkirche of Lubeck— one of the best and most lucrative in Germany—where his playing and musical abilities won wide acclaim. It was here that

Fig. 21—Antonio Draghi, "Credo in unum Deum," Kirchenwerke. 31

31 Ibid., p. 23.
he conceived the idea of instituting great musical performances in connection with the church services. Thus it was, in 1673, that the "Abendmusiken," or evening performances of Lubeck were begun. These productions, which took place annually on the five Sundays preceding Christmas, were so successful that they continued throughout the eighteenth century, and into the nineteenth century. This music consisted of concerted pieces of sacred music for orchestra, chorus, and organ.

While the trombone parts of the Abendmusiken und Kirchenkantaten (1678-1687) are not particularly noteworthy in any respect, there is one outstanding example. This example (Figure 22) is taken from "Ihr lieben Christen, freut euch nun," and the trombone accompaniment to the first and second soprano is marked "Tromboni in Sordino." It is, of course, a matter of speculation as to whether or not Buxtehude intended for the word "sordino" to apply to an actual mute. It must be pointed out, however, that mutes for other brass instruments had been in use for some time, and it is entirely feasible that a trombone mute of some sort was developed by that time.

While other brass instruments have been marked "in sordino," this is the earliest example of muted trombone that the writer has found.
Fig. 22—Dietrich Buxtehude, "Ihr lieben Christen, freut euch nun," *Abendmusiken und Kirchenkantaten.*

Gottfried Reiche (1667-1734), mentioned previously as a member of the Leipzig *stadtpfeifers,* was a famous trumpet virtuoso and composer of this period who, with Pezel, formed the high point of the tower sonata literature. In 1697, Reiche (whose history is even more obscure than was Pezel's)

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33 Dietrich Buxtehude, "Ihr lieben Christen, freut euch nun," *Abendmusiken und Kirchenkantaten*, No. VI, p. 129.
published his *Vierundzwanzig Neue Quaticinia* for one cornetto and three trombones.

![Musical notation](image)

**Fig. 23**—Gottfried Reiche, "Turmsonate fur 4 Blasinstrumente."[34]

Besides being a member of the Town Piper Society of Leipzig, Reiche was also first trumpeter for Johann Sebastian Bach and is reported to have died of an overstrain from playing at a performance of the Bach Cantata, *Preise dein Gluck, Gesegnetes Sachsen* (1734).[35] Reiche’s other works include 1[22] *Abtaststuckgen* (small pieces for wind instruments), and five chorale books which have, unfortunately, been lost.

One of the greatest teachers of this period, Johann Joseph Fux (1660-1741), was also one of the most prolific composers,

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35 Gottfried Reiche, "Vorwort," ibid.
with over four hundred and five works to his name. While his main contribution to the musical literature of his time was the writing of a book on counterpoint (Gradus ad Parnassum, 1725), he added some interesting music from the standpoint of this study. His Mass (see Figure 24) employs a choir of three trombones, while the Sonate o Quatro combines the "violino," "cornetto," "tromboni," and "fagotto" with the trombone having a very difficult part in the movement marked "allegro" (see Figure 25).

![Musical notation](image)

Fig. 24--Johann Joseph Fux, Mass

The period of Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750), certainly marks one of the highest peaks of Baroque music, and his instrumental and choral works still assume a leading role.

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In today's performances. In comparison with the amount of compositions that he produced, Bach makes comparatively little use of the trombone. Indeed he confines the use of the instrument to cantatas, for fifteen of which he used trombones. With three exceptions, Bach used the trombones as support for the chorus. This was, in fact, the beginning of a decline of the use of the trombone in instrumental literature, as will be seen later. His scores reveal his preference for choirs of three or four trombones.

38 Charles Sanford Terry, *Bach's Orchestra*, p. 195. The fifteen cantatas in which Bach used the trombone are: Cantata 2 (see Figure 26), Cantata 2 ("Ach Gott, wie manches Herzeleid"), Cantata 4 ("Christ lag in Todesbanden"), Cantata 21 ("Ich hatte viel Bekummerniss"), Cantata 23 ("Du wahrer Gott und Davids Sohn"), Cantata 25 ("Es ist nichts Gesundes an meinem Leibe"), Cantata 28 ("Gottlob! nun geht das Jahr zu Ende"), Cantata 38 ("Aus tiefer noth schrei' ich zu dir"), Cantata 54 ("Sehet, welch' eine Liebe hat uns der Vater erzeiget"), Cantata 68 ("Also hat Gott die Welt geliebt"), Cantata 96 ("Herr Christ, der ein'ge Gottes Sohn"), Cantata 101 ("Nimm von uns, Herr, du treuer Gott"), Cantata 118 ("O Jesu Christ, mein's Lebens Licht"), Cantata 121 ("Christum wir sollen loben schon"), Cantata 135 ("Ach Herr, mich armen Sunder").
Fig. 26—Johann Sebastian Bach, Cantata 2 ("Ach Gott, vom Himmel sieh' darein").

In Cantata 25, a quartet of three trombones, and a cornetto adds a harmonized chorale to the orchestral theme.

He uses a similar instrumentation as accompaniment to the vocal parts for Cantata 118; while in Cantata 135, he uses a single trombone to strengthen the continuo in the "cantus" of the Choral on which the chorus is founded.

In the works of George Friederich Handel (1685-1759) the trombone seems to be used only twice: in Saul, and Israel in Egypt.

In Act II of Saul, Handel uses the trombones to support the chordal structure of the other instruments of the orchestra in a part marked "a tempo giusto."

Fig. 28--George Friederich Handel, Saul, Act II, p. 24

It is in Act III, however, that he utilizes the sonorous tones of the trombones for the famous "Dead March."

Fig. 29—George Friederich Handel, "Dead March," Saul

In the oratorio *Israel in Egypt*, Handel used the trombones mainly in support of the chordal structure, and only in the chorus parts; however, he uses the trombone quite frequently in independent parts, as is seen in the following example.

![Trombone Example](image)

**Fig. 30**—George Friederich Handel, "Moses Gesang," *Israel in Egypt*.

Despite popular notions to the contrary, there are no trombone parts to the *Messiah*. This misconception arose through the fact that there was given in 1785, a commemorative performance of this work in which it was performed with a group numbering 525, viz:

- 59 sopranos, 48 altos, 83 tenors, and 84 basses.
- 48 first violins, 47 second violins, 26 violas, 21 violincellos, 15 double basses, 6 flutes, 26 oboes.

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26 bassoons, 1 double bassoon, 12 trumpets, 12 horns, 6 trombones, 4 drums, and the conductor.\textsuperscript{44}

It is not known who wrote the special parts needed for this performance, but Burney has this to say about the trombones used in the orchestra:

In order to render the band as powerful and complete as possible, it was determined to employ every species of instrument that was capable of producing grand effects in a great orchestra, and spacious building. Among these the SACBUT, or DOUBLE TRUMPET, was sought; but so many years had elapsed since it had been used in this kingdom, that neither the instrument, nor a performer upon it, could easily be found. It was, however, discovered, after much useless enquery, not only here, but by letter, on the continent, that in his Majesty’s Military band there were six musicians who played three species of sacbut; tenor, bass, and double bass. The names of these performers will be found in the general list of the band.\textsuperscript{45}

The list of musicians playing sacbuts is quite interesting, because all of the names seem to be of Germanic origin, and it leads one to wonder if they were not imported to play in his Majesty’s band. The names are: Karst, Kneller, Moeller, Neibour, Pick and Zink. The following comment appears after their names: "These performers played on other instruments when the sacbuts were not wanted."\textsuperscript{46}

\textsuperscript{44} "George Friederich Handel," Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Vol. II.


\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., p. 19.
CHAPTER III

THE HISTORY OF THE TROMBONE THROUGH THE CLASSICAL
AND THE EARLY ROMANTIC PERIODS

As was stated in Chapter II, the decline of the trombone in musical literature started with Bach, and became even more pronounced as time went on. For a period of years, the instrument was used only enough to justify its very existence.

It is probable that the improvement in the horn (they learned to play a virtually unbroken scale by muting with the hand) tended to throw the trombones into abeyance. After Handel and Bach, they were confined to special points of dramatic emphasis (as in Gluck's Orfeo and Alceste, Mozart's Don Juan, Zauberflote, and Requiem) until Beethoven restored them in the Fifth Symphony. There were five /trombones/ at the Viennese Hofkapelle in 1740, there were none among the Mannheim orchestra of 1777: in a word, they seem to have been gradually ousted by a growing love for tone and evenness of texture.¹

It is interesting to note that the writing of trombone parts of this period fluctuated. In some periods there was little or no music written, and then there was a span of years in which the instrument was used to some extent. For example, Orfeo ed Euridice,² written by Christoph Willibald Gluck

Since the symphony orchestra had little or no use for the trombone before the Fifth Symphony, Beethoven actually introduced the trombone to symphonic literature in that work.

²Gluck revised Orfeo in 1774 for a presentation in Paris; however, there was no change in the trombone parts.
(1714-1787) and performed for the first time in Vienna in 1762, seemed to revive trombone literature for a brief period. For the most part, Gluck used the trombone to accentuate chordal construction, or for "forte" and "fortissimo" passages. However, in Act I, scene 1, of Orfeo, the trombones play softly with the alto trombone and viola doubling their parts.

![Musical notation](image)

Fig. 31--Gluck, Orfeo ed Euridice

3 This scene takes place at the tomb of Euridice.

Figure 32 illustrates the use of trombones for doubling:

Fig. 32--Gluck, Orfeo ed Euridice

5Ibid., p. 23.
Gluck frequently used his trombones in doubling the alto, tenor, and bass voices of the chorus (as seen in Figure 32).

The main consensus of the period seems to be that the trombone, when used, should be utilized for its powerful brass tone. This is true in the following works of Gluck: Overture to the opera Alceste (1769), Iphigénie en Aulide (1772), "Sclaventanz" from Iphigénie en Tauride (1779) in the Ballet-Suite from Balletstücke aus Opern.

After Gluck, there was another period in which composers were reluctant to incorporate the trombone in their music. An example of this may be seen in the works of Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809). This man who did so much for the advancement of the symphony orchestra, used the trombones in only one work, Die Jahreszeiten. Figure 33 shows a five-measure excerpt from this work:

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6C. W. Gluck, Alceste, edited by Walther Vetter (miniature score).

7Gluck, Iphigénie en Aulide, Eulenberg (miniature score).

8In the opera Iphigénie en Tauride, Gluck also reserves the trombones for solemn and especially supernatural effects, for example: Act II, scene 4, Ballet and chorus of "furies." More examples are found on the following pages: 133, 136, 150, 172, 206. This score is published in Leipzig by Eulenberg.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1760-1791) utilized the trombone only four times, but each time, it was in such a way as to mark a very important peak in the trombone literature of this period. In *Don Giovanni* (1787), he uses the trombones only once, and that is at the end of the opera in Act II, scene 15, where the statue (Commendatore) comes to life and drags Don Giovanni to hell to pay for his evil deeds. In this scene, he employs the trombones to suggest the supernatural by a series of chords, depicting the statue and the devils associated with it.

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10 Franz Joseph Haydn, *Die Jahreszeiten*.


12 Ibid.
This theme is heard only when the statue is present on the stage, and is omitted, even when the same thematic material is heard in the overture.

Dent has this to say about the use of the trombones in the music of Mozart:

In practice it is always very difficult to bring them in exactly right and to secure the proper balance of musical color, not only in the chords themselves, but in their relation to what precedes them. At rehearsal, Mozart himself had trouble with the trombone players, and hastily added the parts for oboes and bassoons to safeguard them in case they went wrong. . . . They [trombones] are as foreign to the normal orchestra as the organ is in Robert le Diable, Lohengrin, or Meistersinger. In all operatic church scenes, the indispensable organ is a stage property, and not part of the orchestra, and the trombones in Mozart's day belonged normally to the church and not to the theatre at all.  

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Mozart also uses the trombones briefly in the opera *Idomeneo*\(^\text{15}\) (1781), while in *Die Zauberflöte* (1791) he uses them more frequently (see Figure 35).

Fig. 35—Mozart, *Die Zauberflöte*, Zweiter Akt\(^\text{16}\)


\(^{16}\)Mozart, *Die Zauberflöte*, Zweiter Akt, p. 117 (*ibid.*).
It is in the *Requiem* (1791), however, that Mozart indicates that he has full understanding of the music that the trombone is capable of playing. The "Tuba mirum"\(^{17}\) opens with tenor trombone and bass voice solos (see following example):

\[\text{Mozart, "Tuba mirum," Requiem (ibid.).}\]
tu - ba - mirum spar - gens so - num per se -
Fig. 36—Mozart, "Tuba mirum," Requiem
In the beginning of the Requiem, he again doubles the alto, tenor, and bass voices with the three trombone parts, formulating a technically difficult part, as shown in Figure 37.

Fig. 37—Mozart, Requiem

18 Mozart, Requiem (ibid.), mm. 36-41.
Figure 38 illustrates Beethoven's writing for the trombone:

\[ \text{Fig. 38--Beethoven, Symphony No. 5}^{19} \]

\[ ^{19}\text{Ludwig von Beethoven, Symphony No. 5 (included in Ludwig von Beethoven's Werke, vollständige kritisch durchgesehene), Vol. II., p. 52.} \]
Certainly the highest peak of trombone literature was reached by Ludwig von Beethoven (1770-1827) for it was he who took the trombone and made it an integral part of the symphony orchestra. It is the fact that he treated the trombone as an orchestral instrument rather than the music he wrote that makes him important to this study. Actually, the trombone parts of the fifth (see Figure 38) and sixth symphonies are not out of the ordinary other than the fact that the great master used them. However, in the famous Symphony No. 2, in the last (or choral) movement, he doubles the bass trombone, violincello, contrabass, and bass voice in the stirring theme that is so well known (see following example).
He continues this movement by bringing in the flutes, oboes, clarinets, and bassoons, as illustrated in Figure 40.

\[\text{Fig. 39--Beethoven, Symphony No. 9}\]

\[\text{He continues this movement by bringing in the flutes, oboes, clarinets, and bassoons, as illustrated in Figure 40.}\]

\[\text{Beethoven, Symphony No. 9 (ibid.), Vol. III, p. 234.}\]
It is interesting to note that in the three Leonore overtures, Beethoven uses the trombone in Leonore Nos. 2 and 3 (see Figure 41), but not in Leonore No. 1.

21 Ibid.
Fig. 41—Beethoven, Overture to the opera Fidelio (Leonore No. 3).\textsuperscript{22}

The Mass (Missa Solemnis) gives a good insight on the use of the trombones in the church music of Beethoven (see following example).

\textsuperscript{22}Beethoven, Leonore Overture No. 3 (miniature score, Ernst Eulenberg, Leipzig), p. 26.
Fig. 42--Beethoven, Mass (Missa Solemnis)\textsuperscript{23}

To close this section on Beethoven's use of the trombone, it is appropriate that examples from works calling for four trombones exclusively are used. These three \textit{Equali} (without opus numbers), written by Beethoven,\textsuperscript{24} are still an important part of trombone ensemble music today. See the following figures, Nos. 43, 44, and 45.

\textsuperscript{23}Beethoven, Mass (included in \textit{Ludwig von Beethoven's Werke, vollstandige kritisch durchgesehen}), Vol. XVIII, p. 68.

\textsuperscript{24}Contemporaries of Beethoven who used the trombone were Luigi Cherubini (1760-1842), Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826), Francois Adrien Boieldieu (1775-1834), and Louis Spohr (1784-1895). Examples of their works may be found as follows: Luigi Cherubini, \textit{Anakreon Overture} (1803), Ernst Eulenberg, Leipzig;
Fig. 43—Beethoven, *Three Equali* for four trombones, No. 1.25


Fig. 44—Beethoven, Three Equali for four trombones, No. 2.26

Fig. 45—Beethoven, Three Equali for four trombones, No. 3.27

26 Ibíd.
27 Ibíd. Beethoven also makes use of the trombone in the following works, all of which are contained in Ludwig von Beethoven's Werke, vollständige kritisch durchgesehene: Symphony No. 6 ("Gwitter Sturm"), Vol. II; Christus Am Gelerge, Oratorio, Opus 85, Vol. XIX; Wellington's Sieg oder die Schlacht
The use of the trombone in the symphonies of Franz Schubert (1797-1828) is usually confined to the somewhat traditional manner of "fortzando" and "fortissimo" effects (see Figures 46 and 47).

Fig. 46--Franz Schubert, Symphony in B minor


28 Schubert also used trombones in the following works, all of which may be found in Franz Schubert's Werke, kritisch durchgesehenene Gesammtausgabe: Stabat Mater in G (1813); Graduale "Benedicte es Domine" (1815); Stabat Mater in F (1816); Tantum ergo (1816); D Minor Overture (1817); E Minor Overture (1819); Alfonso und Estrella (1823); Symphony No. 7 (1828).

29 However, in Symphony No. 7, m. 70, he uses the trombones in a passage marked "piano." Franz Schubert's Werke, kritisch durchgesehenene Gesammtausgabe, Vol. I.

Eine kleine Trauermusik (1813) for two clarinets, two bassoons, contrabassoon, two horns, and two trombones, is one of Schubert's most important contributions toward the musical literature of the trombone. Since the work is rarely performed, a more extensive example than usual is given below:

Ibid., p. 9.
The sacred, rather than the secular, music of Schubert formulated his most important contribution to this study. In the following examples, it is to be observed that more often than not, the trombones give chordal support to the chorus rather than emulating the exact rhythm of the voice parts (as did most of the composers of sacred music, who used trombones, from Schutz through Mozart). The following examples (Figures 49-52) are from Schubert's sacred music.

33 See Figure 37.
Fig. 49--Schubert, Mass in F (1814) 34

34 Schubert, "Gloria," Mass in F, p. 50, ibid, Vol. XIII.
Fig. 50--Schubert, Anhang I^{35}

Fig. 51--Schubert, Zur Feier des heiligen Opfers der Messe nebst einem Anhange: Das Gebet des Herrn. 36

36 Included in Franz Schubert's Werke, Vol. II.
Fig. 52--Schubert, Offertorium (1825)\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{37}Schubert, Offertorium ("Tres sunt"), \textit{ibid.}, Vol. XIV, p.4.
In the musical periods following Schubert, the advent of the trombone in symphonic orchestras and literature became an established fact. The trombone today is an accepted member of the symphonic orchestra, and as the proficiency of the players has increased, the composers have written better and more characteristic parts for this instrument.
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