PEDAGOGICAL APPLICATIONS OF SCAT-SINGING

WITHIN THE JAZZ TROMBONE STUDIO

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This study investigates the pedagogical applications of scat-singing within the jazz trombone studio. In addition to the obvious ear-training benefits that the student player can gain from this synthesis, the palette of articulation subtleties and overall musically expressive qualities for trombonists can also be greatly enhanced. These commonalities will encompass the pedagogical focus of this document, utilizing performance recordings and publications by prominent jazz artists and writers to document existing teaching strategies as well as develop new concepts.

The first section of this document presents an introduction that includes a historical overview of scat-singing, prominent scat-singing instrumentalists, and concepts and current literature. The second section presents selected biographies on Wycliffe Gordon and Bill Watrous, both prominent jazz trombonists who sing as well as play the trombone. The third section investigates jazz articulation, scat-singing articulation, and doodle-tongue articulation and their relevance to this topic. The fourth section explores musically expressive qualities as analyzed in Bill Watrous’ solo transcription of “Body and Soul.” The final section draws conclusions about the pedagogical applications of scat-singing within the jazz trombone studio and summarizes current teaching strategies.

Although this document is not a performance guide, an informed performance of the concepts and examples contained herein is required.
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by

Aric Lewis Schneller
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William Russell Watrous has inspired me with his iconic sound and virtuosity since I was very young. At the age of 74, he continues to inspire me with his knowledge of repertoire and world-class artistry. Through this document it is my hope to share his insights with as many trombonists as possible.

I would like to thank Dr. Bill Bridges for his friendship and expert assistance with the editing process of this document.

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INTRODUCTION

Historical Overview of Scat-Singing

“There are differing opinions as to whether the idiom of jazz had a vocal origin of ‘work songs’ as a predecessor to the blues or had an instrumental origin that vocalists began to imitate when people both played an instrument and sang (Louis Armstrong, for example).”\(^1\) However, Jelly Roll Morton, a self-proclaimed inventor of American jazz music, makes many claims in the creation of jazz and its many facets of performance.\(^2\) With respect to the art of scat-singing however, Morton credits Joe Simms (an old comedian from Vicksburg, Mississippi from the early turn of the 20\(^{th}\) century) as the first person to scat-sing.\(^3\) In his recorded interviews from the Library of Congress, Morton stated that he used Simms’ innovation as a way to create improvised vocal introductions for his performances.\(^4\) Furthermore, Morton claims to have done this circa 1906–1907, long before scat-singing was initially made famous by Louis Armstrong and his Hot Five.\(^5\) Armstrong and scat-singing would become forever linked when in his 1926 recording session of *Heebie Jeebies* he dropped his sheet music and improvised melodies and vocables.\(^6\) Also during this same time period, Duke Ellington was experimenting with vocalists who scat-sang in his band. One classic Ellington recording in particular, *The Mooche* (i.e., recorded in October 1,


\(^5\) Ibid.

\(^6\) William Bauer, “Louis Armstrong’s ‘Skid Dat De Dat’: Timbral Organization in an Early Scat Solo,” *Jazz Perspectives* 1, (2007): 143. Bauer introduces the more common definition of “scat-syllables” used by modern-day linguists as “vocables.”
1928 in New York, demonstrates Gertrude “Baby” Cox scat-singing a one-chorus bluesy solo, that resembled a plunger-muted trombone. Joe “Tricky Sam” Nanton immediately followed with a plunger-muted trombone growling solo which sounded identical to Cox’s scat-solo in terms of sound, concept, and articulation.7

Prominent Scat-Singing Instrumentalists

Louis “Satchmo” Armstrong (1900–1971) and Ella Fitzgerald (1917–1996) are two legendary jazz musicians who demonstrated the scat-singing phenomenon with overwhelming success. Fitzgerald, one of the greatest jazz vocalists in history, developed scat-singing by imitating Armstrong and other important artists. Armstrong, often called “the Father of Jazz” and one of the most celebrated jazz trumpeters, could actually scat-sing exactly what he played and vice-versa, which raises an important question with pedagogical implications: how did he do that?8

Based on the historical significance, the current literature on this subject, and the concepts presented in this document, Armstrong was able to do this by integrating pedagogical applications of scat-singing into his jazz trumpet performance summarized by the following teaching strategies:

- Scat-singing and playing by ear a majority of practice sessions and performances
- Transcribing improvised solos by scat-singing along with the recordings until memorized and then transfer them to one’s instrument, first, by ear and second, by scoring these solos as completely as possible
- Scat-singing along with recordings while reading published solo transcriptions, in order to learn the pitches, rhythm, articulations, tone, and style

8 Bauer, “Louis Armstrong’s ‘Skid Dat De Dat’: Timbral Organization in an Early Scat Solo”, 133.
Always thinking, practicing and performing jazz instrumental solos as scat-singing to provide clarity of diction

In addition to Armstrong and Fitzgerald, other significant singers and instrumentalists recognized for their scat-singing abilities include singers Sarah Vaughan (1924–1990), Betty Carter (1929–1998), Jon Hendricks (b. 1921), Al Jarreau (b. 1940) and Bobby McFerrin (b. 1950), trumpeters Dizzy Gillespie (1917–1993), Louis Prima (1910–1978), Clark Terry (b. 1920), Wynton Marsalis (b. 1961), Bryon Stripling (b. 1961), Sean Jones (b. 1978) and Roy Hargrove (b. 1969), saxophonists James Moody (1925–2010) and Denis DiBlasio (b. 1954), and trombonists Frank Rosolino (1926–1978), Bill Watrous (b. 1939), Wycliffe Gordon (b. 1967), and Michael Dease (b. 1982). As demonstrated by these artists, there is an undeniable correlation between scat-singing and instrumental jazz improvisation as a performance practice.

Concepts and Current Literature

The integration that exists between scat-singing and jazz instrumental playing is conceptual and not new. For example, the late Louis Armstrong described this relationship by placing no distinctions between the two: “I figure playing and singing is the same.”9 Similarly, during a master class, Frank Rosolino was asked how he executed his jazz trombone articulations in a particular performance. He responded somewhat impatiently, “I don’t know, I’m just scat-singing.”10 It is fascinating to witness and study musicians who are masters of their art who have not had formal training and yet possess a skill-set equal or superior to some of the most decorated post-

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9 Ibid., 138.
10 Vern Kagarice, Professor of Trombone at the University of North Texas, witnessed this comment by Frank Rosolino at the Eastern Trombone Workshop in 1978.
graduates. Armstrong’s and Rosolino’s integrated conceptualizations not only add considerable weight to this topic, but also require serious consideration of the natural learning process (e.g., observation, mental imaging, imitation and trial and error) as succinctly explained by Daniel Kohut in *Musical Performance: Learning Theory and Pedagogy*.  

The skills required for scat-singing are the same as those required for speaking a language. The most important aspect of scat-singing is that anyone can do it in a call and response setting without prior instruction. Scat-singing solidifies one’s ear in terms of pitch, articulation, style and memory even before one approaches an instrument. In life, one of the first and most important skills that develops naturally is the ability to vocally replicate what one hears in learning to speak. More specifically, one learns to imitate style, articulation, inflection, accents, and rhythmic speech patterns that result in the creation of a language long before one actually learns to read. As with learning a spoken language, the acquisition of a jazz language on a brass instrument follows the same principles. For example, when listening to a recording of an improvised jazz solo, one can scat-sing along by ear until the inflections of the solo are discovered and mastered. The foundation is then in place for transferring the solo to one’s instrument.  

Among the numerous books, dissertations and articles that have been written about scat-singing, Paris Rutherford authored *The Vocal Jazz Ensemble* (2008), in which he asserts that is there is no disconnect between singing and playing and that

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13 Ibid.
scat-singers are to imitate instrumentalists in a stylistically interesting fashion.\textsuperscript{14} James Laughlin has provided a comparative study for teaching beginning jazz improvisers in his dissertation, \textit{The Use of Notated and Aural Exercises as Pedagogical Procedures Intended to Develop Harmonic Accuracy Among Beginning Jazz Improvisers}.\textsuperscript{15} This resource provides empirical evidence to support the importance of aural exercises over notated ones. In addition, it lends further support for the use of singing exercises for aural development as an expansion of jazz language.\textsuperscript{16} Brent Hayes Edwards, an award-winning author and currently Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University, published an article in \textit{Critical Inquiry} entitled “Louis Armstrong and the Syntax of Scat” in which he argues that scat-singing, like programmatic instrumental music, transcends language barriers. This, he asserts,

\begin{quote}
Allows the listener to be moved by the music without the added element of actual text.\textsuperscript{17} Therefore, scat-singing is not only made up of vocables per se, but also carries semantic (although not necessarily lexical) and emotional content.\textsuperscript{18}
\end{quote}

Based on William Bauer’s article in \textit{Jazz Perspectives} entitled, “Louis Armstrong’s ‘Skid Dat De Dat’: Timbral Organization in an Early Scat Solo” appears to be the cornerstone bibliographical and analytical reference for Armstrong’s integration between scat-singing and trumpet playing.

Bryon Stripling’s portrayals of Louis Armstrong in Broadway’s \textit{Satchmo} (a musical based on the life of the musician and inspired by Armstrong’s musical style)

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{14} Paris Rutherford, \textit{The Vocal Jazz Ensemble} (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2008), 62.
\textsuperscript{15} James Edwin Laughlin, “The Use of Notated and Aural Exercises as Pedagogical Procedures Intended to Develop Harmonic Accuracy Among Beginning Jazz Improvisers,” (Ph.D. diss., University of North Texas, 2001), i.
\textsuperscript{16} Laughlin, “The Use of Notated and Aural Exercises as Pedagogical Procedures Intended to Develop Harmonic Accuracy Among Beginning Jazz Improvisers”, i.
\end{flushright}
notwithstanding, Wycliffe Gordon is considered by many to be the authentic modern-day torch–bearer of Armstrong himself. Gordon’s virtuosity on the trombone and his uncanny vocal and scat-singing style are not only reminiscent of Armstrong but are equally unique. Further investigation of Gordon’s work is an important focus of this document. In his book, *Sing It First* (2011), Gordon and his co-author, Alan Raph, present many exercises that address trombone technique and its fusion with scat-singing. Furthermore, Gordon and Raph begin every lesson in this book with scat-singing. Relative pitch development is definitely a positive side effect of his important approach to practice, and the scat-singing done to promote it can be done just as easily with written music as without. At this point one could ask the logical question, “Since *Sing It First* already exists, why the need for this study?” Although *Sing It First* is the first trombone text of its kind to focus solely on the exploration of this topic, it begs for further research, reexamination of recordings and a continued search for contributions by other authors.

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SELECTED BIOGRAPHIES

Wycliffe Gordon

Wycliffe Gordon, born in Waynesboro, Georgia in 1967, was introduced to music by his late father, Lucius Gordon, who was a teacher and classical pianist.\textsuperscript{20} Wycliffe Gordon started playing the trombone at the age of 12 during the time his older brother played the same instrument in junior high school band.\textsuperscript{21} At age 13, not long after beginning the trombone, Gordon started developing his passion for jazz by listening to an extensive record collection that was inherited by his immediate family from one of their aunts.\textsuperscript{22}

Currently on the faculty at the Manhattan School of Music, Gordon is an internationally celebrated trombonist, singer, composer, and master teacher. Gordon first hit the international jazz scene when he began playing in Wynton Marsalis’ Septet in the early 1990s and is a former member of the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra. In the thirty-four years since his earliest beginnings, Gordon has performed literally all over the world and is the youngest member of the U.S. Statesmen of Jazz, a touring ensemble featuring senior musicians, where he continues to give his services as a musical ambassador for the U.S. State Department.\textsuperscript{23} Among his many accolades, Gordon has been the winner of countless awards from \textit{Down Beat Magazine}, \textit{Jazz Journalist Association}, \textit{International Trombone Association}, and ASCAP. Gordon also has many commissioned works to his name and is a co-author with Alan Raph of his newest

\textsuperscript{21} Gordon, “The Official Website of Wycliffe Gordan”, \url{https://www.wycliffegordon.com/}
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
trombone method book titled, *Sing It First*, the first of many of his books that explore his unique vocal approach to the trombone.\(^{24}\) Gordon also has seventeen solo CDs to his credit with eight as a leader. As a testament to Gordon’s success as a teacher and performer, he was awarded an honorary doctorate as described below:

> In 2006, Wycliffe Gordon was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Scranton (Pennsylvania), and cited as a champion of America’s music – a music that models the ideals of democracy through its performance demands for positive and productive interaction, honest communication, and commonality of soul; a music that celebrates triumph of the human spirit over adversity.\(^{25}\)

**Bill Watrous**

Bill Watrous, born in 1939, was introduced to the jazz trombone at an early age by his father, Ralph Watrous, also a trombonist; although he never had formal lessons per se, Watrous has been described as one of the most gifted and naturally talented trombonists to have ever lived.\(^{26}\) He is also one of the finest bop-oriented trombonists of the past 40 years, and has virtually become a legend in the trombone community and with jazz enthusiasts the world over. Possessor of a beautiful singing-tone and remarkable technique, Watrous, at the age of 74, is still playing and recording constantly as a featured soloist in the United States and abroad.

While growing up Watrous played in traditional jazz bands as a teenager and studied with Herbie Nichols while in the military.\(^{27}\) Watrous made his debut with Billy Butterfield and His Orchestra and from 1962–1967 he was a member of Kai Winding’s septet. He was a busy New York-based studio musician during the 1960s, working and

\(^{24}\) Gordon and Raph, *Sing It First*, 1–38.

\(^{25}\) Ibid.


recording with Quincy Jones, Maynard Ferguson, Johnny Richards, and Woody Herman. Watrous also played in the television bands of the Merv Griffin and Dick Cavet shows from 1965–1968 and worked on the musical staff of CBS from 1967–1969. After playing with the jazz-rock group Ten Wheel Drive in 1971, Watrous led his own big band, the Manhattan Wildlife Refuge from 1973–1977, recording two critically acclaimed albums for Columbia Records. After moving to Los Angeles in 1976, Watrous continued working in the studios, appearing at jazz parties, playing in local clubs, and leading the occasional big band. He has recorded as a leader for Columbia, Famous Door, Soundwings, GNP Crescendo, and with his late-'90s big band for Double-Time Records. From 1975–1980, Watrous was the winner of six consecutive Downbeat reader's polls and the 1976 critic's poll.

In 1983, Watrous co-authored Trombonisms with Alan Raph, which is still in print today. This book documents Watrous’ vocal approach to playing the trombone while also displaying his extended technique and range concepts. In keeping with Watrous’ mission of educating young musicians in trombone and jazz, Sam Houston State University is celebrating its fourth annual SHSU Bill Watrous Jazz Festival.
JAZZ ARTICULATION AND LANGUAGE

Scat-Singing Articulation

One of the easiest and quickest ways for an instrumentalist, in either the jazz or classical tradition, to learn to scat-sing is to use articulations from one’s respective instrument (e.g., trumpet, trombone, saxophone, etc.) while singing traditional melodies. A sample exercise from Wycliffe Gordon and Raph’s Sing It First displays the most rudimentary trombone articulation patterns based on scat-singing vocables to the traditional song “Silent Night” (see Example 1). The vocables with the asterisk (i.e., * Da la la la) demonstrate a smoother and more legato approach to singing and playing, but with an initial “D” to give more definition on the attack.

Example 1. “Silent Night,” mm. 1–2

\[
\begin{align*}
\textbf{B} & \quad \textbf{b} \quad \textbf{3} \\
\text{Da} & \quad \text{da} \quad \text{da} \quad \text{da} \quad \text{da} \\
\text{Ta} & \quad \text{ta} \quad \text{ta} \quad \text{ta} \quad \text{ta} \\
* \text{Da} & \quad \text{la} \quad \text{la} \quad \text{la} \quad \text{la}
\end{align*}
\]

* Da makes a better initial attack (than La)

The articulations in combination with the simple melodic cell solidify one’s memory in terms of intervallic relationships, the tonal center and, ultimately, the articulation patterns themselves.

Elaborating further, Gordon and Raph explain that instead of just “noodling

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34 Gordon and Raph, Sing It First, 9.
35 Ibid.
around on the trombone” per se, one could have a specific melody of a song (see
Example 2), a jazz lick, an orchestral excerpt, or a fragment in one’s
“mind’s ear” then go back and forth from scat-singing and playing it two measures at a
time, checking oneself in terms of pitch and style.

Example 2. “Silent Night,” mm. 1–24

Ultimately, according to Gordon and Raph, one of the most interesting aspects of
this practice is the development of possible perfect pitch by hearing the music in one’s
mind and then feeling or “tasting” the notes in one’s embouchure. In scat-singing

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36 If one can see things in one’s mind’s eye, then why not hear with one’s mind’s ear?
37 Gordon and Raph, Sing It First, 11.
38 Ibid., 12.
terms, this is akin to ease of vocal onset immediately after one hears the desired pitch. However, relative pitch development is definitely a positive side effect from this important type of practice which can be done just as easily with written music as without.\textsuperscript{39}

Another corresponding concept of this type of practice that complements Gordon and Raph’s previous example is by Chris Washburne, a prominent trombonist and professor in New York City. Washburne states, “It becomes a simple process . . . If they can hum a melody and then they can play it, it makes things a lot easier.”\textsuperscript{40} Washburne credits Gunther Schuller and Ran Blake in the Third Stream Department of the New England Conservatory of Music for developing ear-training exercises of singing solos by picking simple melodies on tape, learning them by ear, and singing them back.\textsuperscript{41} Washburne discusses this method:

> It’s very effective in the sense that you have to hear something and you have to sing it back, and you have to memorize it. Once you can sing it back exactly the way you hear it, then the next step is to play it on your instrument the same way as well, capturing all the inflections and all the proper notes and rhythms and things . . . That’s a very good technique of developing this ear-to-horn relationship.\textsuperscript{42}

To recapitulate, the above teaching strategy and concepts of Gordon and Raph and of Washburne suggest that there are great benefits to be realized of ear-training by the memorization of articulation patterns utilizing scat-singing vocables in a systematic fashion of alternating between singing and playing simple melodies.

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{40} Julie Gendrich, \textit{Bonanza: Insights and Wisdom from Professional jazz Trombonists} (Delevan, NY: Advance Music, 2011), 425.
\textsuperscript{41} Gendrich, \textit{Insights and Wisdom from Professional jazz Trombonists}, 425.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid.
Doodle-Tongue Articulation

There are many vocables that have been used since the inception of scat-singing. For example, “doodle” stands as one of the most innovative scat-singing vocables to be used by jazz trombonists in the past eighty years. Theoretically, if we compare pitches played on a trombone to vowels sung on pitch, then brass articulations may be compared to vocal consonants. “Doodle-tonguing” is as simple as pronouncing the word “doodle.” This type of articulation has been used by noted trombonists such as Vic Dickenson, as early as the 1930s, which coincides with the popularization and experimentation of scat-singing at that time. In a rare interview of J.J. Johnson by Tom Everett, Johnson cites Dickenson as one his major influences in learning to doodle-tongue in order to play more smoothly and quickly.43

Another famous trombonist who was a master of this type of articulation was Carl Fontana (1928–2003).44 As cited by Bill Watrous in March 2013 about Fontana, young students would often ask Fontana how he played so quickly and smoothly and his answer was always, “Aw, just doodle, doodle, ding, ding, man!”45 Watrous performed side-by-side with Fontana for many years, ultimately becoming the torch-bearing master of this type of articulation. Sample rhythmic exercises from Bill Watrous and Raph’s Trombonisms display this articulation using the “A” vowel based on the scat-singing vocable “da-dl” (see Example 3).46

Today, most aspiring jazz trombonists know how to employ this technique. Other

45 Bill Watrous, discussion with the author, Huntsville, TX, March 2013.
46 Watrous and Raph, Trombonisms, 28.
famous jazz trombonists who have successfully used this articulation technique include Jimmy Cleveland, Kai Winding, Conrad Herwig, John Fedchock, Paul McKee, Bob McChesney, Larry Farrell, Birch Johnson, Jim Pugh, Andy Martin, and Harry Watters.
Example 3. Various Da-dl Tonguing Exercises

Accents within 4/4 meter

Other meters

Combined meters

Two-bar patterns
MUSICALLY EXPRESSIVE QUALITIES

Bill Watrous Solo Transcription Analysis

In, “The Body and Soul of Jazz Trombone: From Jack Teagarden and Miff Mole to Trummy Young, Tommy Dorsey, and Bill Watrous – A Look at the Evolution of the Trombone as a Solo Instrument in Jazz” (1985), Gerald Sloan presents the original idea of transcribing and printing improvised solos by Jack Teagarden, J.J. Johnson, and Bill Watrous in score form below the “Body and Soul” theme, as shown below (see Example 4).\footnote{Gerald Sloan, “The Body and Soul of Jazz Trombone: From Jack Teagarden and Miff Mole to Trummy Young, Tommy Dorsey, and Bill Watrous – A Look at the Evolution of the Trombone as a Solo Instrument in Jazz.” The Instrumentalist 40, (1985): 14–21; especially p.20.}

Example 4. Sloan’s solo transcriptions of “Body and Soul,” mm A–33

\begin{center}
\includegraphics{example4.png}
\end{center}
As a preface, Sloan provides background on some thirty-nine prominent jazz trombonists from the early 1920s to 1985 while also relating the advancement of these players to their key counterparts on trumpet and saxophone (e.g., Louis Armstrong, Bix Beiderbecke, Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, and Cootie Williams).\(^{48}\) The study and practice of written transcriptions of prominent players and the analysis of such is very commonplace today. It is, however, very interesting to note the reactions from prominent players when shown transcriptions of their recorded solos. Sloan shares the following anecdote: “Dizzy Gillespie, when shown one of his own transcriptions by a youthful admirer, pondered it a moment, then reportedly exclaimed: ‘I can’t play that!’”\(^{49}\) This is a revealing acknowledgement considering that Gillespie was one of the greatest creators, innovators, and performers of Be-bop jazz.

In April of 2013, Watrous had a similar reaction when I presented Sloan’s transcription of “Body and Soul,” however, he then began to scat-sing, at sight, almost note-for-note, over my shoulder when I played it for him. In essence, Watrous was using my live performance as a model to learn his transcribed solo, and he used scat-singing as his method to teach himself the notes, the musical expressive qualities, and most importantly the articulation. Immediately thereafter, he started to practice and play portions of the solo on trombone in the same fashion as he had just scat-sung it. Being able to witness, firsthand, Watrous using teaching strategies based on scat-singing helped me to appreciate and realize fully the possibilities of utilizing scat-singing for teaching jazz trombone improvisation.

\(^{49}\) Ibid., 19.
Bill Watrous’ characteristic style of line and tone and how his scat-singing abilities affect his trombone articulation are legendary, especially with respect to his interpretations of ballads. Although not readily depicted on the score, Watrous’ tone has always been described as mellifluous and compact in such a way that it mimics a jazz vocalist when singing on a microphone, so much so that he has been both praised and criticized for his general lack of volume other than that of just above a whisper or a mezzo forte dynamic level at best. More important are the inflections of line that can be gleaned from scat-singing effects on trombone articulation. At first glance of Watrous’ solo transcription, one can see that the rhythmic complexity, high range extremes, and sheer number of notes could possibly resemble a vocal cadenza of virtuoso proportions. However, the tempo of approximately one quarter note equaling sixty-four beats-per-minute allows for more ease of execution and phrasing of a laid-back swing/double-time nature.

For this analysis, I explore and show examples of the musically expressive qualities gained from scat-singing from Sloan’s transcription of Watrous’ improvised solo on “Body and Soul” from the recording, I’ll Play For You – The Solo Trombone of Bill Watrous (Progressive Records). These qualities include Watrous’ use of vibrato, melodic phrasing that follows the song form, and floating rhythms in and over the bar-line resembling cadenzas. Again, one can develop and refine these qualities by scat-singing and memorizing solos by celebrated jazz artists from recordings and then transferring them to the trombone.

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50 Kurt Dietrich, Jazz ’Bones The World of Jazz Trombone (Rottenburg N., Germany: Advance Music, 2005), 357–358.
52 Ibid.
Vibrato

Although Watrous’ has mainly been classified as a bop-oriented trombonist, his use of vibrato (i.e., both slide and jaw vibrato in close imitation of a jazz singer) comes directly from the lyrical swing tradition of Tommy Dorsey with one exception. Unlike Dorsey, whose vibrato was usually always fast almost like a tremolo on long notes, Watrous uses his vibrato with varying speeds (i.e., slow and fast at the beginnings and endings of long notes). In “Body and Soul,” Watrous has a total of 20 measures in which he ties notes in and over the bar-line (see measures 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 22, 25, 26, 27, 31, 32, and 33), and he uses vibrato in all of these instances. Jack Teagarden uses a fast vibrato a total of 13 times in his solo and J.J. Johnson, having 27 instances of long and or tied notes, chooses not to play with vibrato at all. In hindsight, one could compare Watrous’ rendition, in the very least with respect to his use of vibrato, to the great jazz singer-stylist Sarah Vaughn and her uncanny ability to sound like an instrumentalist. She always uses varying degrees of vibrato speeds for expressivity and line in her melodic phrasing. Like Watrous on trombone, Vaughn has immeasurable technical facility with her voice.

Melodic Phrasing Over Song Form

This comparison leads directly into the next musical expressive quality of melodic phrasing that follows the song form. In the same way Vaughan sings, Watrous

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54 Enstice and Rubin, Jazz Spoken Here: Conversations with Twenty-Two Musicians, 296.
58 Ibid.
plays melodic lines that thread through the original melody as well as the chord changes. He first does this by playing long notes that rest on 3rds and 7ths of the chord changes (see Example 5) while providing melodic connective material in between. For example, in measure 1 Watrous plays a G♭ on beat 2 and a C♮ between beats 1 and beat 2 in measure 3.


Other visible examples of this musical quality are the following: measure 4, beat 3, the high D♭ over the E diminished; measure 6, beat 1, the E♭ over the C minor; measure 7, beat 1, the D♭ over the B♭ minor; measure 8, beat 3, the C♭ over the A♭ m7(-5); and measure 9, all of the D♭s in the measure (see Example 6).

The remainder of these following melodic phrasing qualities can be seen in the full score of Example 3: measure 12, the A♭ on beat 1 and the G♯ on beat 3; measure 14, the A♭, second half of beat 2; measure 15, the D♭s on beat 2 & the A♭ on beat 4; measure 19, the C♯ on beat 1; measure 20, the F♯ on beats 2 and 3; measure 21, the B♭ on beats 3 and 4; measure 22, the E♭ on beat 2; measure 24, the B♭ on beat 1, the A♭ on beat 2, and the A♭ on beat 3; measure 27, the F♯s on beats 1 and 2; measure 29, the D♭ on beat 1; and finally in measure 31, all of the D♭s on beats 2, 3 and 4.

Again, from these examples, Watrous continues to make use of this type of melodic phrasing which follows the song form and harmonic rhythm.
Floating Rhythms Resembling Cadenzas

The third musical expressive quality for discussion is Watrous’ use of floating rhythms resembling cadenzas. As previously discussed in Chapter 3, Watrous’ complete mastery of the scat-singing doodle-tongue articulation allows him to execute his sixteenth-note and triplet sixteenth-note patterns in and over the bar-lines. Watrous displays this musical expressive quality in every measure of his solo transcription seamlessly floating between a rubato ballad style and double time swing feel.

For example, Watrous plays the lead-in measure (i.e., measure “A”) in a straight sixteenth note ballad style, but then switches to double time swing feel in measure 1 (see Example 7). As shown in Example 7, Watrous alternates between ballad and swing feel playing in a rubato style in the measures labeled “straight” and bringing back the sense of double time feel in the measures labeled “swing.”

Example 7. Sloan’s solo transcriptions of “Body and Soul,” mm A–33.
In measures 13, 18, 21, 27, 29, 31 and 32, Watrous seamlessly floats between ballad and double time swing feel within the individual measures themselves: measure 13, beats 1 through 3 are straight and beat 4 is swing; measure 18, beats 1 through 3 are swing and beat 4 is straight; measure 21, beats 1 through 2 are straight and beats 3 through 4 are swing; measure 27, beat 1 is swing, beats 2 and 3 are straight, and beat 4 is swing; measure 29, beat 1 is swing, and beats 2 through 4 are straight; measure 31, beats 1 through 2 are straight and beats 3 through 4 are swing; and measure 32, beats 1 through 2 are swing and beats 3 through 4 are straight. To reiterate, of the 34 measures of this transcription, Watrous plays 11 measures in a ballad style with rubato, 15 measures with a double time swing feel, and the remaining 7 measures with combinations of both musical characteristics. To summarize, amidst the seemingly complex nature of his interpretation of “Body and Soul,” Watrous uses scat-singing doodle-tongue articulations and the musically expressive qualities of vibrato, melodic phrasing that follows the song form, and floating rhythms in and over the bar-line resembling cadenzas to compose a structurally sound improvised solo.
CONCLUSIONS: INTEGRATING CONCEPTS INTO MUSICAL INSTRUCTION

Based on its historical significance, the current literature on this subject, and concepts presented in this document, the Pedagogical Applications of Scat-Singing Within the Jazz Trombone Studio can be summarized by the following teaching strategies. The trombonist should:

- Scat-sing and play by ear a majority of practice sessions and performances
- Transcribe improvised solos by scat-singing along with the recordings until memorized and then transfer them to the trombone, first, by ear and second, by scoring these solos as completely as possible
- Scat-sing along with recordings while reading published solo transcriptions, in order to learn the pitches, rhythm, articulations, tone, and style
- Always think, practice and perform jazz trombone solos as scat-singing (e.g., like Frank Rosolino) to provide clarity of diction

As explained by Daniel Kohut, this natural approach to learning music can readily be applied to scat-singing and teaching jazz trombone improvisation. Its strategies, at once conceptual and practical, have proven to be a mainstay in Bill Watrous’ approach to teaching at the University of Southern California since 2000, an approach which may be emulated. Furthermore, the acclaimed success of Gordon and Raph’s Sing It First suggests that this approach can help young musicians master their craft. What remains, then, is for complete development of the pedagogical applications presented in this paper, which lies beyond its present scope. Thus, other researchers, band directors, teachers, and artists may pursue the strategies and practices established in this essay as they work to help develop the next generations of jazz musicians.
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