

1992

The Life and Work of the Orchestral Bass Trombonist, Allen Ostrander, and the Development of His Bass Trombone Methods and Solos.

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Ostrander, and the development of his bass trombone methods
and solos**

Smith, Ronald Gene, D.M.A.

The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col., 1992

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Ann Arbor, MI 48106**

THE LIFE AND WORK OF THE ORCHESTRAL BASS
TROMBONIST, ALLEN OSTRANDER, AND THE
DEVELOPMENT OF HIS BASS TROMBONE
METHODS AND SOLOS

A Monograph

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana
State University and Agricultural and Mechanical
College in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts

in

The School of Music

by

Ronald G. Smith
A.B., Marshall University, 1976
M.M., Ithaca College, 1978
May 1992

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this monograph is to document the career of Allen Ostrander as an orchestral bass trombonist as well as an arranger and composer for the instrument. It also examines the significant contributions he made regarding performance skills, teaching, and improvements to the bass trombone.

The research was accomplished primarily by conducting an interview with Ostrander. Additional information came from former colleagues, students, and orchestras that gave insight into his life and career as performer, composer, and teacher.

The monograph begins with a discussion of Ostrander's tenor trombone studies before he became a professional bass trombonist. He studied with some of the most prominent brass instrumentalists of his day including Ernest Williams, Gardell Simons, and Simone Mantia among others.

Ostrander's professional career began in 1935 when he won an audition for the bass trombone position with the National Symphony Orchestra. It marked the first time he had ever played the bass trombone. He taught himself the skills needed to play it by applying what he already had learned from his previous teachers. He

spent the next forty years as a professional bass trombonist with the Pittsburgh Symphony, NBC Symphony, and the New York Philharmonic.

The twenty-nine years Ostrander performed with the New York Philharmonic are most significant because of the popularity he enjoyed while he was with it. More trombonists became interested in playing the bass trombone and he began teaching it. Ostrander composed the first bass trombone method book in the United States while teaching his first bass trombone student. He subsequently composed and arranged several bass trombone methods, etudes, and solos. He also contributed to the design of the double valve bass trombone.

Ostrander's approach to teaching bass trombone performance is documented through his method books and the students he taught. He placed special emphasis on tone quality, intonation, rhythmic accuracy, and proper phrasing. Ostrander passes on a great legacy for bass trombonists through his method books and teaching as well as his own performing ability.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Allen Ostrander was born on December 14, 1909, in Lynn, Massachusetts. He began his trombone studies at the age of thirteen with Aaron Harris, and later studied with Ernest Williams, Simone Mantia, and Gardell Simons. In 1932, Ostrander graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree from the Ithaca Conservatory of Music. His career as an orchestral bass trombonist includes positions with the National Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony, NBC Symphony, and the New York Philharmonic. Ostrander wrote most of his methods, etudes, and solos during his twenty-nine year tenure with the New York Philharmonic. In 1975, Ostrander retired from the New York Philharmonic and now makes his home in Ithaca, New York.

Primary Goal

The primary goal of this monograph was to gather data on the life and work of Allen Ostrander as an orchestral bass trombonist, on the historical development of his methods, etudes, and solos for the bass trombone, and on his role as a teacher.

Secondary Goals

1. What were the major musical factors that influenced Ostrander's training before college?

2. How was Ostrander prepared for a performing career while a student at Ithaca College?
3. What techniques did Ostrander's various teachers use to improve his performance abilities?
4. How did Ostrander develop his technique on the bass trombone upon joining the National Symphony Orchestra in 1935?
5. What practice routine did Mr. Ostrander use as an orchestral bass trombonist?
6. How did conductors of the different orchestras in which Ostrander performed influence his playing technique?
7. What other bass trombonists influenced Ostrander in the development of his playing, teaching, and his methods and etudes?
8. What were the circumstances of performance during Ostrander's career as a studio musician for NBC?
9. How did resident conductors of the orchestras in which Ostrander performed view the bass trombone?
10. What was Ostrander's influence at Juilliard School of Music, Hartt School of Music, and Columbia University?
11. How was each of the following methods, etudes, and solos composed or arranged?
 - a. Method for Bass Trombone and F Attachment for Tenor Trombone

- b. The F Attachment and Tenor Trombone
 - c. Basic Techniques for the Double Valve Bass Trombone
 - d. 20 Minute Warm-Up
 - e. Shifting Meter Studies for Bass Trombone
 - f. Double Valve Bass Trombone Low Tone Studies
 - g. Melodious Etudes for Bass Trombone
 - h. Concert Piece in Fugal Style
 - i. Sonata in g minor
 - j. Concerto in One Movement
 - k. The Lion
 - l. Praeludium, Chorale, Variations, and Fugue
 - m. Unpublished sacred arias
12. What was Ostrander's position with regard to the following:
- a. The application of his methods, etudes, and solos to teaching?
 - b. the bass trombone as a solo instrument?
 - c. the bass trombone in the orchestra?

Delimitations

The biographical portion of this study concentrated on Ostrander's performing and teaching career as a bass trombonist. It included his work as a studio musician for the National Broadcasting Company.

The historical development of Ostrander's method books, etudes, technical studies, and solos was limited to those

for the bass trombone. His works for tenor trombone were omitted from this study.

Need for Study

In order to gain more knowledge and better understanding of the bass trombone in the symphony orchestra, it was important to study the life of a bass trombonist who has served many years in the field.

Biographical studies of bass trombonists have been limited to brief interviews found in the ITA Journals (the official publication of the International Trombone Association). In a listing of 342 dissertations dealing with brass instruments, there were no biographical studies of orchestral bass trombonists. Biographical studies of other brass instrument players are numerous. Ostrander's career not only includes orchestral playing, composing, and teaching, but also his contribution to the mechanical improvements of the bass trombone. This makes documentation of his career important.

Materials used for teaching the bass trombone are constantly being changed, and the knowledge of how the materials can best be used in teaching cannot always be ascertained. If one examines the thinking and approach of the author of these materials, their use as pedagogical tools increases.

Since Ostrander's works are among the earliest methods, etudes, and solos written for the twentieth century bass trombone, the need to study the evolution of bass trombone materials becomes even more apparent.

Review of the Literature

The most complete biographical study of Ostrander was an interview by Bruce Tracy in the April 1984 issue of the ITA Journal. The interview covered generalities of Ostrander's life, including his early training in high school and college. It also included discussion of Ostrander's studies with Gardell Simons and Simone Mantia. Although literature for the bass trombone was discussed, only a slight mention was made of his first method book, which incorporated the ideas of Gardell Simons and Simone Mantia. There was no discussion of Ostrander's solos. In the interview, Ostrander related his views of the development of the bass trombone and the changes in sound concepts that have resulted.

Additional information was gained in a published interview in which Randy Kohlenberg led a discussion with Gordon Pulis, Lewis Van Haney, and Ostrander, which was featured in the April 1983 ITA Journal. These men comprised the trombone section of the New York Philharmonic from 1946 to 1963. This interview gave information on how they functioned together during their years with the

orchestra with a particular emphasis on their ability to get along with each other and to work as a section. An example Ostrander noted was that they studied together over everything in every piece, aside from orchestra rehearsals.

Procedure for Study

The procedure for this study consisted of three main steps. The first step was the preparing of a bibliography and the collection of data. The second step was the organizing of the data and then classifying it in relation to Ostrander's orchestral career or to the development of his bass trombone materials. The third step was the writing of the monograph.

The primary source for this study was a series of interviews with Ostrander conducted January 13-16, 1990. In these interviews, questions were asked regarding his career and the development of his various materials for bass trombone. In preparation for questions regarding Ostrander's musical materials, this writer played them, noting questions that arose, which aided in the interview. Questions asked about his orchestral career revolved around incidents and stories that Ostrander believed pertinent to his legacy.

Other primary sources included an examination of records, letters, and manuscripts. Ostrander kept records

regarding the sacred arias he arranged for himself to play at the Bethany United Methodist Church of Fort Lee, New Jersey. Photographs, programs, and correspondence related to the subject of this monograph were examined and organized.

An important secondary source were interviews done by correspondence with former students of Ostrander. These students, all of which responded by either letter or telephone, included Edwin Anderson, Indiana University; Terry Cravens, University of Southern California; Thomas Everett, Harvard University; John Mead, Marshall University; and Arden Norton, formerly with the United States Military Academy Band. Other second sources included a letter from Lewis Van Haney, formerly with the New York Philharmonic, and photocopies of programs, advertisements, and other items from the archives of the Pittsburgh Symphony and the New York Philharmonic.

Correspondence was also received from the following publishers regarding music they published for Ostrander: Southern Music Company, Kendor Music, Carl Fischer, and Robert King Music Company. Edition Musicus and International Music Company failed to respond, but with Ostrander's assistance and some older catalogs, it was possible to find out what music of his they published.

Organization and Classification of the Data

The data procured for this monograph was examined and analyzed for accuracy and importance to the study. The main guides for classification were the topic areas as outlined in the primary and secondary goals.

Chapter one contains the introduction, including primary and secondary goals, delimitations, need for study, review of the literature, and procedure for study. Chapter two deals with important aspects of Ostrander's early training as a tenor trombonist, which led to his being appointed as second trombone of the National Orchestral Association.

Chapter three outlines Ostrander's professional career, beginning with his joining the National Symphony Orchestra in 1935, and tells how he became a bass trombonist. Also discussed are the improvements in the mechanics of the bass trombone with particular emphasis on the double valve bass trombone, and his experiences with auditions and conductors with the National Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony, NBC Symphony, and the New York Philharmonic. His activities since his retirement in 1935 are also described.

Chapter four is a discussion of Ostrander's composing and arranging the various methods, etudes, and solos for the bass trombone and their significance to the instrument.

Chapter five gives special attention to Ostrander as a teacher through discussion of his position on certain fundamentals of brass instrument playing, as well as his special techniques for the bass trombone. Information gathered came from an interview with him, the study of his own publications, interviews with former students, and the writer's own experience of having him as a teacher.

Chapter six summarizes the study, states conclusions that resulted from it, and makes suggestions for further study.

CHAPTER 2

THE EARLY TRAINING OF OSTRANDER

Allen Ernest Ostrander was born in Lynn, Massachusetts, on December 14, 1909, to Ernest and Beulah Ostrander. His father was a machinist with the General Electric Corporation and managed various departments in the company, and his mother was a homemaker. Allen had one sibling who died as an infant sometime before Allen was six years old.¹

Both of his parents had some musical background with his father a bass church soloist and his mother a piano teacher. His earliest musical experiences were piano lessons with his mother who had opened a small teaching studio in their home.

Ostrander's interest in band instruments began when he heard the American Band of Pittsfield, New Hampshire, where his family owned a summer home and he regularly attended concerts. His parents decided that he should learn to play a band instrument and encouraged him to take up the cornet, since it seemed to be a popular solo instrument. However, Ostrander wanted to play the

¹The following information is taken from a tape recorded interview with Allen Ostrander by the writer, Ithaca, New York, 13-16 January 1990.

trombone instead, because he liked its sound and he wanted to go against his parents' wishes.

In the summer of 1923, Ostrander's parents ordered his first tenor trombone from Sears and Roebuck Catalog, at a cost of \$9.45. The instrument came with an instructional book, E-Z Instructor, which contained simple tunes that he taught himself to play.

Ostrander's father was able to hear his son play only on weekends in Pittsfield during that summer. His family was living at their summer home while he was working with the General Electric Corporation in Lynn, Massachusetts, and he commuted to Pittsfield on the weekends to be with his family.

The older Ostrander was impressed with his son's talent. Not wanting his son to develop bad playing habits, he sought a trombone teacher with the assistance of his own voice teacher, C. Francis Woods, music supervisor for the Saugus, Massachusetts, school system. Woods recommended Eddie Harris, a trombonist with the Strand Theater Orchestra in Lynn. With Harris, the younger Ostrander received instruction in basic playing techniques typical for a beginner. Ostrander discontinued his lessons with Eddie Harris in the spring of 1926, because the family was moving to Pittsfield for the summer. Although there was nothing unique in his three years of study under Harris,

Ostrander believes they were beneficial in forming a solid foundation in his development as a trombonist.

In the fall of 1926, Ostrander had the opportunity to study with Aaron Harris (the brother of Eddie), a former violinist and euphonium soloist with the bands of John Phillip Sousa, Arthur Pryor, and Patrick Conway. Having grown tired of traveling on band tours and being away from his family, Harris returned to Lynn to become the concertmaster of the Colonial Theater Orchestra in Boston, Massachusetts.

The type of instruction Ostrander received was a continuation of what he had learned under Eddie Harris. There was more emphasis on advanced technique of the trombone slide and articulation, but Aaron Harris's greatest contribution to Ostrander's playing was teaching him all of the major and minor scales. As a teenager, he played all of the scales in his daily practice.²

Performance opportunities were limited for Ostrander during his teenage years. He attended Saugus High School in nearby Saugus, Massachusetts,³ and played trombone in

²Allen Ostrander, Ithaca, letter to the writer, Pensacola, FL, 12 July 1990.

³"New York Philharmonic Publicity Questionnaire" (photocopy), Archives, New York Philharmonic, New York, 1.

its orchestra because there was not a school band, and he happened to be the only trombonist in the school. The orchestra's responsibilities were to perform for musicals, plays, and graduation activities. Ostrander's most memorable performance with the orchestra was a production of Gilbert and Sullivan's H.M.S. Pinafore conducted by a music student from Boston University in the winter of 1926.⁴

During the summer, Ostrander played with the American Band in Pittsfield, giving him more opportunities to perform than he had had at school. He played the second trombone part and occasionally performed solos with the band such as Simone Mantia's arrangement of Stephen Foster's Old Folks at Home.⁵

By the time Ostrander graduated from high school in 1928, he had already decided to continue his studies in music at the college level. At the suggestion of Aaron Harris, he chose the Patrick Conway Military Band School which was affiliated with the Ithaca Conservatory of Music. Conway, a cornet player as well as a band director, started the school in 1922, after taking his band on

⁴Ostrander, interview by the writer.

⁵Ibid.

extensive tours. His band was known for giving consistent, exacting performances and, because of its popularity, was reputed to be the successor to Sousa's band.⁶

This same consistency carried over into Conway's teaching, as Ostrander recalls. Conway required precision and excellence in articulation, intonation, tone control, and rhythm. He was concerned more with how Ostrander played the trombone parts of band music than with how he interpreted solo literature. Conway was a fine teacher, particularly in what Ostrander called "bread and butter" type of playing defined as

. . . trombone passages that you find in orchestral playing. It may be short notes or long notes that fit in with the accompaniment. It is musical punctuation. These notes make up the basics of playing.

Ostrander's studies may have been more beneficial if Conway had been able to demonstrate on the cornet how he wanted the music to be played. However, by this time Conway was unable to play his instrument because of bad health and could only explain the techniques to Ostrander.⁸

⁶H. Wiley Hitchcock and Stanley Sadie (eds.). The New Grove Dictionary of American Music (London), MacMillan Press Limited (1986), Vol. 1, s.v., "Conway, Patrick," by Raoul Camus.

⁷Ostrander, interview by the writer.

⁸Ibid.

In June 1929, Conway died and was replaced by Ernest Williams, bandmaster of the Kismet Shriner Band in Brooklyn, New York, as well as the director of his own band and orchestra camp.⁹ Williams was highly regarded as a cornet soloist, having played with Sousa's band in his younger years. He was also well-known as a teacher and as a composer of several trumpet methods and solos.¹⁰

Williams used his trumpet methods and Arban's Famous Method, also for trumpet, as teaching materials for Ostrander, since there were few trombone method books on the level of difficulty Williams wanted for Ostrander, and the trombone edition of the "Arbans" was not yet available. Williams used these method books to improve Ostrander's articulation and, particularly, his double and triple tonguing. Using the double and triple tonguing sections along with the scale and arpeggio studies in the "Arbans," he taught Ostrander to use "Ku" to articulate the notes in an effort to strengthen that syllable so when it was combined with "Tu," a balanced attack was articulated. Although "Ku" articulation is usually weak for

⁹John B. Harcourt, The Ithaca College Story (Ithaca, N.Y.: Ithaca College, 1983), 30.

¹⁰Glen Bridges, Pioneers of Brass (Detroit: Sherwood Publications, 1965), 87.

most trombonists, Ostrander eliminated the problem by using this technique. He learned from Williams "Tu-Ku, Tu-Ku, Tu" as the pattern for double tonguing and "Tu-Tu-Ku, Tu" for triple tonguing.¹¹

In addition to trombone studies, Ostrander also studied orchestration privately with Williams. Ithaca Conservatory allowed students to sign up for an orchestration examination without ever taking orchestration as a class. Upon passing the examination, the student would receive credit for the orchestration class. Ostrander passed as he recalls, with the highest score of any student from 1928 to 1932.¹²

Having had instruction in orchestration, Ostrander began arranging band accompaniments for trombone solos in the late summer of 1929. He played the solos with the school band under Williams's baton and became the featured soloist in almost every band concert.¹³ None of Ostrander's arrangements were ever published—the manuscripts may have been lost in two fires that ravaged the music building, one in 1937, and the other in 1955.¹⁴

¹¹Ostrander, interview by the writer.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Harcourt, 64.

Some of the arrangements included Clay Smith's My Song of Songs and Valse Aria No. 2: "Mein Ideal," Alshausky's Concert Waltz, Gardell Simons' Valse, Simone Mantia's All Those Endearing Young Charms, as well as some of Walter Smith's cornet solos and Arthur Pryor's trombone solos.¹⁵

In the summer of 1930, Ostrander composed his first solo, written in the style of a polonaise for tenor trombone and band, making use of free counterpoint. It was originally entitled Polonaise, but was changed to On the Fair Grounds to give it a more marketable title when it was published in 1956 by Edition Musicus.¹⁶ The band parts were condensed into a piano reduction for publication by Marvin Salzberg,¹⁷ a piano student at the Hartt School of Music.¹⁸ The band score has been lost, but Ostrander believes that the band parts may still exist.

¹⁵Ostrander, interview by the writer.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Allen Ostrander, On the Fair Grounds (Stanford, Conn.: Edition Musicus, 1956), 1.

¹⁸Ostrander, interview by the writer.

While Williams was still teaching at the Ithaca Conservatory, he also directed the Ernest Williams School of Music located in Saugertis, New York.¹⁹ In the summer of 1931, Ostrander attended Williams's school so that he could obtain credits to transfer to Ithaca for his degree. While he was there, Gardell Simons, a friend of Williams, came to visit.²⁰ Simons had been a trombone soloist with Sousa and Conway,²¹ and in 1915 had become principal trombonist of the Philadelphia Orchestra, a position he held until 1931.²² During that visit, Williams arranged for Ostrander to take a few lessons with Simons. These proved to be the beginning of an important relationship between the two in the years ahead. The lessons were informal, and Simons's method book, an adaptation of Matilda Marchesi's vocal method, was used for practice material. He used the book extensively that summer and considers it an excellent method. However, he did not learn the material in the manner Simons expected,

¹⁹Harcourt, 30.

²⁰Ostrander, interview by the writer.

²¹Bridges, 107.

²²Herbert Kupferberg, Those Fabulous Philadelphians: The Life and Times of a Great Orchestra (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969), 226.

probably because he did not have enough lessons from Simons.²³

Before the fall semester began in 1931, Williams left the conservatory to concentrate his efforts on the development of his own school. Williams was replaced at the conservatory by Jay W. Fay as band director²⁴ and Walter Beeler as brass instructor.²⁵ At that time, the affiliated Patrick Conway Military Band School was absorbed by the conservatory's department of music education.²⁶ Beeler, a talented trombonist, had graduated from the Ithaca Conservatory with a major proficiency in baritone horn at the same time Ostrander was a student. Under Beeler, Ostrander studied a different aspect of trombone playing, concentrating on an expressive, singing style, using material taken from vocal literature.²⁷

Ostrander graduated in the spring 1932 with a Bachelor of Science degree in instrumental music education. Unable to find a teaching position because of the Depression, he

²³Ostrander, interview by the writer.

²⁴Harcourt, 30.

²⁵Ostrander, interview by the writer.

²⁶Harcourt, 30.

²⁷Ostrander, interview by the writer.

went to New York City to visit his former teacher, Williams, in hopes that Williams could assist him in finding work. When Williams asked what he wanted to do, Ostrander declared he wanted to play professionally rather than teach.²⁸

Because of his many contacts in the city, Williams was able to get Ostrander an audition with the National Orchestral Association (NOA) in late spring 1932.²⁹ This organization had been founded in 1930 as a training institute directed by Leon Barzin to prepare musicians for professional orchestras.³⁰

The circumstances surrounding the audition came about when one of the trombonists of the NOA orchestra, also a student at the Juilliard School of Music and a member of its orchestra, had a conflict when each orchestra had a concert on the same night. The trombonist was obligated to play with Juilliard's orchestra since he was a degree student. Because this left Barzin shorthanded for a trombonist, an impromptu audition was held for Ostrander

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Hitchcock and Stanley, eds., Vol. 3, s.v. "National Orchestral Association," by John Shepherd.

immediately before the NOA's dress rehearsal. Since there was no music stand in the auditioning room and time was precious, Barzin simply held the music for Ostrander, who does not recall what it was he played. He won the audition and also was awarded a fellowship from the NOA that provided enough money to pay for his room and board.³¹

Ostrander was able to supplement his finances with a few free-lance jobs. The opportunities were scarce because of the Depression, and he had not yet established his musical reputation with the New York City local of the Musicians' Protective Union. He had been a member of the local in Lynn, Massachusetts, during his college days so that he could earn money playing in area town bands during the summer, and he moved to New York City, transferring his membership to its local.³²

In 1934, Ostrander decided he wanted to continue his trombone studies and asked Barzin if he could arrange for him to take lessons with Simone Mantia,³³ a former euphonium soloist with Sousa's band in 1898 and later with the Arthur Pryor's band. Mantia was recognized

³¹Ostrander, interview by the writer.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid.

as an outstanding trombonist of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra beginning in 1908 and later became its personnel manager. Mantia was the author of the method book, The Trombone Virtuoso, and was co-editor with Charles Randall of Arban's Famous Method for the trombone.³⁴

Ostrander knew of Mantia's reputation as a trombonist because he had attended performances of the Metropolitan Opera and had heard him play. He recalls paying a quarter a ticket for four nights to stand in the gallery of the opera house to hear Richard Wagner's The Ring of the Nibelung in 1930. It was during these performances that Ostrander was impressed with Mantia's trombone playing.³⁵

When Ostrander asked Barzin regarding the lessons, Barzin immediately called Mantia, whom he knew through some mutual acquaintances at the Metropolitan Opera. He offered to have the NOA pay for the lessons since Ostrander made so little money; however, Mantia accepted Ostrander as a student and refused any payment.³⁶

Ostrander used Mantia's The Trombone Virtuoso and also worked extensively on trombone parts from opera literature,

³⁴Bridges, 97.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid.

particularly those by Wagner, for lesson material. Mantia used this material with Ostrander since Mantia was most familiar with it and felt that Ostrander would gain the most from it for developing into an orchestral trombonist.³⁷

The most important aspects of the lessons were the development of flexibility in the right arm and learning to use all the notes available in the seven slide positions. This helped Ostrander learn them quickly. In the introduction to the book, Mantia states that the trombonist should learn these new and improved positions of all the pitches in order to play with greater ease and better intonation.³⁸

Mantia's approach to teaching slide technique was to use a sweeping motion of the slide arm. The movement was to be done freely, without any stiffness in the elbow and wrist, and it was most important that the slide move in time with the tempo and rhythm of the music for speed as well as accuracy.³⁹

Mantia also taught Ostrander a method of holding the slide in order to keep this freedom and relaxation in the

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Simone Mantia, The Trombone Virtuoso (New York: Carl Fischer, inc., 1949), 1.

³⁹Ostrander, interview by the writer.

arm. The right wrist was kept flat to form a straight line from the elbow to the end of the thumb, thus allowing the arm to extend unconstrained for the sweeping motion.⁴⁰

Ostrander believes that the lessons on slide technique were some of the most valuable ones he received in his career. Mantia was a model teacher and performer to imitate, as he was able not only to explain the uses of the slide, but was a master at demonstrating them. Ostrander will always remember him as a fine teacher and a wonderful gentleman.⁴¹

Ostrander's musical education in preparation for performing with professional orchestras reflects the seriousness with which he approached his trombone playing. He sought study with some of the most important and popular brass players of his day and learned specific styles and techniques from each one. It is interesting to note that the majority of them were not trombonists, showing that Ostrander saw value in studying with other brass instrument players.

Ostrander does not believe he was a "natural" trombone player and says that he had to work hard at every aspect

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid.

of his studies. His goal was to perform in the correct manner as taught by his teachers and in the end develop all of their techniques into his own playing style.

CHAPTER 3

OSTRANDER'S PROFESSIONAL LIFE

In spring 1935, Ostrander was visiting his parents in New Hampshire during a vacation from the NOA. While there, he received a telegram from the NOA by telephone regarding an audition to fill a vacancy in the trombone section of the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, D.C. The NOA was often informed of vacancies in professional orchestras since it had developed an excellent reputation as a training orchestra.¹ Ostrander immediately went to a nearby railroad station to obtain a printed copy of the telegram and to take a train to New York City where the audition was to be held. Earlier when he had received the telephone message, he had thought that the audition was for the principal trombone position, but upon receiving the printed copy, he realized that it was for the bass trombone position. Even though it was somewhat of a shock to him--he knew nothing about playing the bass trombone--he decided to audition anyway since he needed a job with steady income.²

¹Ostrander, interview by the writer.

²Ibid.

Upon arriving in New York City, he borrowed a bass trombone from an individual who was also auditioning for the position. The two men, who had not met previously, happened to be staying at the same hotel where the audition was to take place. Ostrander does not recall what the gentleman's name was or the circumstances of their meeting, but does remember the instrument quite well. It was a 1919 model made by the C. G. Conn Company and had been used by Fred Blodgett, bass trombonist of Walter Damrosch's New York City Symphony Orchestra. Ostrander spent the day before his audition practicing on it, since he had never played a trombone with F attachment valve before. He also worked out an agreement with the owner of the bass trombone to purchase it for forty-five dollars if he won the audition.³

When Ostrander began practicing with the instrument, he realized that there were only six positions on the slide with the valve depressed, rather than the normal seven, because the extra tubing for the valve caused the positions to be further from each other. He obtained copies of the bass trombone parts that were on the repertoire list and practiced them to familiarize himself

³Ibid.

with the music. He experimented with the instrument, trying to play the notes with the valve in tune.⁴

At nine o'clock the following morning, Ostrander played the audition for Hans Kindler, music director of the National Symphony Orchestra, and George Gaul, personnel manager. Ostrander distinctly remembers playing excerpts from Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 6 in b minor because of some controversy concerning it during his audition. Evidently, it was a hand-copied part that had been transposed a perfect fourth lower, making it more difficult to play. Ostrander recognized this and called it to Kindler's attention, believing he had altered it, but Kindler denied tampering with it and insisted that it was in the correct key. Ostrander played the excerpt as written, but later checked and found he was correct—it had been altered.⁵

Ostrander won the audition, much to his surprise, since he thought he had played horribly. He had never played the bass trombone before, knew little about how the valve worked, and thought there must have been some much better bass trombonists who had auditioned. He now wonders if bass trombonists knew how to play their

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

instruments properly or perhaps he was the only one to audition.⁶ The individual who loaned the bass trombone to Ostrander may have decided that rather than risk losing the audition and having nothing to show for it, he was better off to sell the bass trombone and take the forty-five dollars, which he did.

When Ostrander joined the National Symphony for its 1935-36 season, it was the first time since the orchestra's founding in 1931 that musicians received full-time employment at union wages.⁸ Ostrander recalls receiving forty-three dollars per week for a concert season of twenty-three weeks. He believes that wages had previously been paid on a per service basis, meaning that the orchestra member was paid only when needed. With the new contract, however, an individual was paid whether he was needed or not.⁹ The orchestra also presented a series of outdoor concerts after the regular season that provided employment through the summer months.¹⁰

⁶Ibid.

⁷Robert R. Craven, ed., Symphony Orchestras of the United States (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1986), 74.

⁸New York Times, 4 April 1935, 21.

⁹Ostrander, interview by the writer.

¹⁰New York Times, 29 September 1935, Sec. X, p.7.

Ostrander lived with a family in a large apartment near Constitution Hall where the National Symphony gave concerts, allowing him to walk to rehearsals and affording him a place to practice. George Gaul, personnel manager for the orchestra, knew the family and was instrumental in helping Ostrander make arrangements to rent a bedroom.¹¹

Most of Ostrander's time was taken up by orchestra rehearsals and his own practice, which he felt was desperately needed since he was learning a new instrument. There were very few free-lance playing opportunities in Washington, D.C., so he spent the time learning to play the bass trombone and practicing orchestra parts for the symphony's concerts.¹²

For practice material other than orchestra music, he used his treble clef version of Arban's Famous Method, which he had practiced during his studies with Ernest Williams. He practiced Arban's book by thinking the exercises in bass clef and mentally transposing them as he played them in all keys. He did this with virtually the entire book. In addition, he practiced Johannes

¹¹Ostrander, interview by the writer.

¹²Ibid.

Rochut's Melodious Etudes for Trombone, a collection of studies arranged from vocalises of Marco Bordogni, in which he, again, mentally transposed each etude a half step down as he played them in all keys.¹³

During the National Symphony's 1935 Christmas break, Ostrander traveled to New Hampshire to visit his parents, who were now living there permanently, and also stopped in Boston to visit Hans Waldemar Lillibach, bass trombonist of the Boston Symphony.¹⁴ Lillibach, whom Ostrander referred to as Walter, was a native of Denmark and first learned to play the accordion and violin before learning the trombone. He had played in Danish military bands before coming to the United States where he played bass trombone with the New York Philharmonic (1921-24),¹⁵ Boston Symphony (1938-41), and the Cleveland Orchestra (1941-48).¹⁶ Ostrander had met Lillibach when the Dane

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Gerome Brush, Boston Symphony Orchestra: Charcoal Drawings of Its Members (Boston: Boston Symphony Orchestra, Inc., 1936), 120.

¹⁶Douglas Yeo, "A Pictorial History of Low Brass Players in the Boston Symphony Orchestra, 1887-1986," International Trombone Association Journal 14 (Fall 1986): 17.

came to coach the NOA trombone section on the proper interpretation of orchestral music.¹⁷

Ostrander made his visit to Lillibach's apartment in Boston before arriving in New Hampshire. The purpose of the visit was for Ostrander to find out more precisely how to use the valve on the bass trombone, and how far apart the positions on the slide should be when using the valve. In about twenty minutes, Lillibach demonstrated for him where the positions were with the valve pressed as well as for which pitches in the staff to use it. The brief session with Lillibach was the only lesson Ostrander had with a bass trombonist and it was most significant since this information and technique was subsequently used throughout his career.¹⁸

In 1937, Ostrander learned by reading newspapers and listening to the radio that the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) was forming a new symphony orchestra to perform live radio concerts under the direction of Arturo Toscanini.¹⁹ Artur Rodzinski, highly regarded as a musical trainer of orchestras including the Cleveland

¹⁷Ostrander, interview by the writer.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

Orchestra and later the New York Philharmonic, was selected to hold auditions and conduct some of the rehearsals and performances.²⁰ Ostrander, thinking that this opportunity might be better for him financially, decided to write a letter to NBC inquiring about auditions since there had been no official announcement regarding the time or place. NBC did not answer his letter and when he made a trip to New York City with the purpose of directly meeting with its staff, they refused to see him in their office.²¹

Being persistent, Ostrander went to see an old friend, Bob Paolucci, a former classmate at the National Orchestral Association and at this time a trombonist with Columbia Broadcasting Studios. Paolucci took Ostrander to meet Mario Falcone, principal trombonist of the New York Philharmonic, because Falcone had played under the direction of Rodzinski. Paolucci thought that if Falcone heard Ostrander play the bass trombone, he might have some influence with Rodzinski and NBC. Ostrander, with his instrument, went to Falcone's apartment to play for him and to discuss his interest in auditioning for the NBC Symphony. Falcone listened to Ostrander play a few

²⁰Halina Rodzinski, Our Two Lives (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976), 159-60.

²¹Ibid.

pages from an elementary trombone method book, but offered no suggestions whatsoever and made no remarks regarding his playing abilities or the audition. Ostrander then left and returned to his hotel room.²²

The following day Ostrander was awakened by a telephone call from NBC asking him to audition for the orchestra, evidently on the advice of Mario Falcone. He performed the audition by memory for Rodzinski, playing orchestral excerpts from the music of Wagner, and won the second trombone position. Ostrander refused the second trombone offer because he thought that he might be more comfortable playing bass trombone.²³

Because he was still under contract with the National Symphony through the 1937 season, Ostrander returned to Washington, D.C. At the end of that particular season, the orchestra had a two-week break before it was to perform an extra concert. Therefore, Ostrander went to Cleveland, Ohio, to have a few lessons with one of his former teachers, Gardell Simons, who was now a trombonist with the Cleveland Orchestra. After the two-week period, Ostrander returned to Washington, D.C., and Simons

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

traveled to California for a vacation during the summer months.²⁴

While in California, Simons learned that Otto Klemperer, music director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra,²⁵ was hired by an organization called the Pittsburgh Association of Music Lovers to audition musicians for a revitalized Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra.²⁶ The orchestra, once considered one of America's best, had ceased existence because of poor economic conditions brought on by the Great Depression and the devastating flood of 1936. The Pittsburgh Association of Music Lovers had raised sufficient funds to financially support the orchestra again.²⁷

Aware that Ostrander was seeking a different orchestra with which to perform, Simons wrote to him informing him that Klemperer was to audition personnel at Carnegie Hall in New York City.²⁸ Klemperer had

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Peter Heyworth, ed., Conversations with Otto Klemperer (Boston: Victor Gallanez, Ltd., 1973; revised, London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1985), 11.

²⁶New York Times, 5 August 1937, Sec. III, p.18.

²⁷Craven, 352.

²⁸Ostrander, interview by the writer.

already held auditions in Pittsburgh for three weeks and accepted seventy musicians from that area. The auditions in New York City were for an additional twenty musicians, including a bass trombonist.²⁹ Ostrander traveled to New York City for the audition and won it by playing excerpts again from Wagner's operas, noting that most conductors wanted to hear Wagner because of the big tone quality his music required. Since both the salary and season were better, Ostrander immediately moved to Pittsburgh, taking up residence in a boarding house located near Carnegie Music Hall where the orchestra was to give its concerts.³⁰ According to Wilbert Frisch, an original member of the orchestra, the base salary during its first year was fifty dollars a week for a twenty-six week season.³¹

Klemperer was contracted to rehearse and conduct the orchestra's first six weeks of concerts and was given the title of guest conductor. The first concert was October 21, 1937, before a very appreciative audience

²⁹New York Times, 5 August 1937.

³⁰Ostrander, interview by the writer.

³¹Wilbert Frisch, Pittsburgh, letter to the writer, Pensacola, FL, 23 August 1990.

of 3,200, featuring Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 in c minor, among other compositions.³² Ostrander recalls that the concert went well, despite a certain degree of nervousness partially due to the youthfulness of the orchestra.³³

Klemperer was offered the position of musical director but declined, preferring to return to the better established Los Angeles Philharmonic.³⁴ A succession of various guest conductors were used, including Fritz Reiner who conducted a series of concerts during March 1938 and became permanent musical director the following season.³⁵ Ostrander remembers Reiner as a fine conductor who gave more polished performances with the orchestra than previous conductors.³⁶

While he was in Pittsburgh, Ostrander continued to take lessons from Simons, who was now with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. Ostrander traveled by train to Detroit every two weeks for a lesson and continued to use

³²New York Times, 24 October 1937, Sec. XI, p.7.

³³Ostrander, interview by the writer.

³⁴Cravens, 352.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ostrander, interview by the writer.

Simons's method book concentrating on tone control and articulation.³⁷

For Ostrander, the study of articulation was most fruitful, learning to use the tongue in four playing styles—regular, staccato, legato, and semi-legato. Developing these styles enabled Ostrander to play without splitting or missing notes and to articulate notes in orchestral passages exactly in the manner a conductor might ask. Ostrander credits Simons for his ability to articulate clearly and accurately as a result of his studies with Simons beginning at Ernest Williams's music camp.³⁸

Ostrander also did some teaching of his own when he was in Pittsburgh in an effort to supplement his income. He purchased advertisement space in the orchestra's program book offering trombone instruction during the symphony season.³⁹ The advertisement gave the symphony's office telephone number and address for contacting him

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid.

regarding lessons.⁴⁰ He had one pupil during the 1937-38 season and gave the lessons in a room in Carnegie Music Hall.⁴¹

There was a humorous incident Ostrander recalls about himself that occurred in one of the Pittsburgh Symphony concerts. During a performance of Brahms' Symphony No. 2 in D Major, he played the entire bass trombone part from memory. He thought that the second trombonist was going to have a heart attack from being so surprised at this feat. Ostrander, who possesses a phenomenal ability to memorize and even played his auditions from memory, did it to see if he could "pull it off." Looking back, he cannot believe he did such a thing and considers it a part of his youthful foolishness.⁴²

In spring 1938, Ostrander was contacted by Simone Mantia about a vacancy for bass trombone with the NBC Symphony for the 1938-39 season. Mantia was still principal trombonist with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra

⁴⁰Allen Ostrander: Trombone Instruction," (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Symphony Society Yearbook, advertisement, 1937-38, 6.

⁴¹Ostrander, interview by the writer.

⁴²Ibid.

as well as its personnel manager, and thus was well respected by musicians in New York City. NBC asked Mantia to call Ostrander so that he in turn would contact NBC. At the time, orchestras usually did not advertise vacancies, but instead musicians were to contact the orchestra. The music unions did not have the control over auditions as they do now and often the only way to learn of vacancies was by verbal communication.⁴³

Ostrander was very much interested in the position, since it meant a higher salary and more prestige because of its conductor, Toscanini. He telephoned NBC and made arrangements to play the fourth trombone part as an extra player in an upcoming concert featuring only Wagner works which allowed Toscanini the opportunity to see how he performed under pressure with little rehearsal, a necessity for the symphony's rigorous schedule.⁴⁴

The following day, Ostrander had an audition with Toscanini and Leopold Spitalny, personnel manager of the NBC Symphony,⁴⁵ in Toscanini's dressing room at Carnegie Hall. Greetings were exchanged and Ostrander got his

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Joseph Horowitz, Understanding Toscanini (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1987), 170.

bass trombone ready to play in a corner of the triangular-shaped room while Spitalny and Toscanini talked privately in an opposite corner. Spitalny then walked to where Ostrander stood and informed him that Toscanini wanted to hear him play something that demonstrated a big, full tone and Ostrander proceeded to play from memory the famous trombone melody from Wagner's overture to the opera, Tannhäuser, with Spitalny standing beside him. After Ostrander finished playing the selection, Spitalny walked back to the corner where Toscanini was sitting and again conversed privately. Returning to Ostrander's corner, Spitalny told him that this time Toscanini wanted to hear a big, full tone in the low register of the bass trombone. He then played from memory the tuba part of a Bach chorale arrangement that he had played while a member of the National Symphony. Again, Spitalny conferred with Toscanini privately and next said to Ostrander that the maestro wanted to think about it more before offering the position. Ostrander replied that he wanted to do the same before accepting if it were offered. A few weeks later, he received notification that he had won the audition and that his employment was to begin in the fall. Eventually, the entire trombone section was replaced before the fall season began. The new section consisted

of Ostrander on bass trombone; Samuel Lewis, second trombone; and Gardell Simons, principal trombone.⁴⁶

The work with the NBC Symphony proved to be challenging because of the precision and accuracy upon which Toscanini insisted, as well as the number of performances, recordings, and his radio broadcasts. Ostrander believed that his previous instruction and performance opportunities had well prepared him for the task. Toscanini, known for his tirades toward his orchestra during rehearsals, rarely addressed Ostrander regarding details of his playing and when he did, it was not of a serious nature.⁴⁷

In 1939, Ostrander visited the C. G. Conn Company of Elkhart, Indiana, to discuss with the instrument engineers some possible improvements in his bass trombone. While taking a tour of the factory, he was surprised to learn that the company had only one bass trombone in stock, demonstrating there was not a great demand for the instrument.⁴⁸

The problem that Ostrander wanted improved was the length of the tuning slide for the F valve. The tuning

⁴⁶Ostrander, interview by the writer.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid.

slide was long enough to allow C below the bass staff to be played in tune using a flat or long seventh position with the F valve pressed, but the instrument did not have the capability to play a low B. Ostrander asked if they could make him a bass trombone with a longer tuning slide in the bell section to allow him to play the low B. The factory designed it and gave it to him for his approval. He liked the new instrument except for the hand slide and opted to use the new bell section with his old one because he thought it sounded better.⁴⁹

During Ostrander's tenure with the NBC Symphony, the orchestra made recordings, some taken from the live radio broadcasts and others from special taping sessions. These taping sessions were particularly difficult because Toscanini had preconceived ideas of what he wanted to hear. What he heard while conducting the orchestra during the taping and from the playback never sounded the same. However, instead of allowing the recording engineers to make adjustments electronically, he tried to manipulate the sound from the orchestra.⁵⁰ For Ostrander, these taping sessions were the most trying times of his career at NBC because of the pressure Toscanini put on the orchestra.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid.

The symphony players were required by NBC to perform for other radio broadcasts as well, since these were all done live. The orchestra members were divided into small groups and performed background music for the various radio programs such as dramas, variety shows, comedies, and commercials. They also performed special effects such as laughter which was created by playing smears on the trombone.⁵¹

One type of broadcast that involved the entire orchestra was the Music Appreciation Hour, conducted and narrated by Walter Damrosch, former director of the Symphony Society of New York City. The concerts were held every Friday for one hour with children brought in from area public schools to provide an audience in the studio. During the program, Damrosch's extemporaneous discussion of the music and its composers led to some humorous broadcasts, due to some blunders he made.⁵²

As a studio musician at NBC, Ostrander found that the amount of time for rehearsals and performances was considerably more than for the symphony because its rehearsals were scheduled for ten hours per week for a one and a half

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid.

hour Saturday night broadcast.⁵³ Rehearsals for some studio broadcasts were often held late at night, and performances were given almost daily. Often, the musicians arrived for a rehearsal to find a staff composer still writing the music; they played it literally before the ink was dry. The studio orchestra played through the music several times looking for wrong notes and other copying errors. With no actual rehearsal, they performed the work. This kind of performance required outstanding sight reading ability on the part of the musicians as there was no time to practice difficult passages; it had to be right the first time.⁵⁴

The musicians of NBC took pride in their work as a symphony and as a studio orchestra. Since all of the broadcasts were live, the orchestra had no margin for error, creating an esprit de corps that Ostrander says was unlike any other orchestra with which he performed.⁵⁵

Much of the pride was probably a result of Toscanini's influence and his popularity with the public even before

⁵³B. H. Haggin, Conversations with Toscanini, 2d ed., (New York: Horizon Press, 1979), 15.

⁵⁴Ostrander, interview by the writer.

⁵⁵Ibid.

his joining NBC. Although he was known for his tyrannical outbursts toward musicians during rehearsals, he also was able to befriend them and show compassion, often referring to them as his "boys."⁵⁶ When Toscanini took the NBC Symphony on a South American concert tour in 1939, one of the violists was tragically killed in a traffic accident. Toscanini was so upset at this loss that he reportedly wept and refused to eat or leave his suite for a few days. In the meantime, the orchestra members established a trust fund for the violist's family and Toscanini contributed a thousand dollars.⁵⁷

Ostrander considers Toscanini the finest conductor for which he played because of his ability to get the sound he wanted from the orchestra. Toscanini's abilities to conduct were not as impressive as his rehearsal technique and his knowledge of orchestration because he was so concerned about the quality of orchestra timbre. Of the conductors for which Ostrander auditioned and played under, Toscanini was the only conductor who seemed to have a concept of what the bass trombone's tone quality should be throughout its entire range.⁵⁸

⁵⁶Harvey Sachs, Toscanini (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1978), 268.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 273.

⁵⁸Ostrander, interview by the writer.

According to Ostrander, Toscanini was always well prepared because he studied the orchestral scores thoroughly and knew each individual orchestral part. Ostrander has an autographed picture of Toscanini studying a score. On a visit to his home, he pointed to it and remarked to this writer that conductors need to spend more time studying scores.⁵⁹

If Toscanini had a weakness in his conducting, it was in trying to conduct twentieth-century music, particularly compositions with odd meters. He had great difficulty in conducting a five beat pattern. Ostrander recalls that in one performance in which Toscanini was conducting Stravinsky's Petrushka he waved his arms in circles to get through it. It is needless to say that under Toscanini, the amount of twentieth-century literature performed by the NBC Symphony was quite limited.⁶⁰

Most of the recordings taped by Radio Corporation of America (RCA) of the NBC Symphony, were made after Ostrander left NBC in spring 1946,⁶¹ but there are still a few from the 1938-43 era. A recording taken from a live broadcast on February 22, 1941, in Carnegie Hall

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Ibid.

featuring Act I, Scene 3, of Wagner's Die Walküre with soloists Helen Traubel and Lauritz Melchior⁶² is one of the few in which the trombone section consisting of Simons, Lewis, and Ostrander can be heard. A review of the recording claims that it is a fine example of the quality of playing the NBC Symphony did particularly in its early years.⁶³ The writer possesses a copy of the recording and finds that the trombone section played with good balance between the parts and excellent clarity of articulation. The sound is shrill and there is some tape hiss, which is to be expected from such a dated recording. A graphic equalizer helped to eliminate some of the shrillness and hiss but also darkened the tone quality.

In 1943, at the height of World War II, Ostrander joined the U.S. Army and was placed in a military band located at an ammunition depot near Thomasville, Georgia. While stationed there, he had the opportunity to perform for a wedding reception at a rather exclusive country club. The parents of the bride, wanting a musician of

⁶²Speight Jenkins, Jr., Wagner: Die Walküre: Act I, Scene 3, Ride of the Valkyries; Siegfried: Forest Murmurs: Die Götterdämmerung: Siegfried's Funeral March. NBC Symphony conducted by Arturo Toscanini, phonodisc VIC-1316(e), RCA, 1968.

⁶³Robert Charles Marsh, Toscanini and the Art of Conducting (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1957, revised, New York: Collier Paperback Books, 1962), 150.

professional caliber and prestige, heard that he was a member of the NBC Symphony and contacted him about playing for the reception. Because he needed the money, he agreed to it and was given a list of songs they wanted him to play, including everything from Mendelssohn's "If With All Your Heart" to the popular song "Night and Day." He wrote the arrangements and fashioned them into a booklet form, making it easy to turn the pages as he played. A soldier from the depot was his accompanist. It was one of the most interesting free-lance jobs he had during his professional career.⁶⁴

When the war was over in 1945, Ostrander was released from his military obligations and returned to New York City and his position with the NBC Symphony. Upon his arrival, he was contacted by Maurice Van Praag, personnel manager of the New York Philharmonic, asking him to be a substitute for an ill trombonist. The orchestra was scheduled for an all Wagner Concert which required four trombonists. Because two of their five trombonists were ill, they needed someone to play the fourth part. The reason that the New York Philharmonic had five trombonists was that employers were required to accept men back to

⁶⁴Ostrander, interview by the writer.

their previous employment upon returning from military duty after a war.⁶⁵

Ostrander was chosen as the substitute by Artur Rodzinski, who at the time was musical director of the New York Philharmonic and knew of Ostrander's abilities from guest conducting the NBC Symphony. Also by this time, Ostrander's reputation as a bass trombonist had grown extensively throughout the Northeast making him a person other orchestras might seek.⁶⁶

On the Friday immediately after Thanksgiving, Ostrander played the morning dress rehearsal and the evening concert. During the concert intermission, Van Praag approached him about becoming the regular bass trombonist for the New York Philharmonic beginning with the 1946-47 season. By that time the orchestra could legally fire those musicians they did not want who had returned from the military. Van Praag wanted to work out the business arrangements first and then give the other man his release notice; but Ostrander, thinking this procedure was unethical, refused any offer until the other bass trombonist was first notified of his dismissal at the end of the 1945-46 season. Van Praag finally

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Ibid.

agreed to this arrangement and eventually all five former trombonists were released before the new season began.⁶⁷

Ostrander accepted the new position because the future of the NBC Symphony was uncertain due to Toscanini's age and the possible impending changes in radio broadcasting procedures.⁶⁸ The NBC Symphony had been created especially for Toscanini in 1937⁶⁹ when he was seventy years old, and he was now seventy-eight. It was not known if the orchestra would continue to function if he were unable to conduct. Radio broadcasting was changing because of the advent of the tape recording program which eliminated some of the live studio work that had been available. It was a time of change in personnel for the NBC Symphony because many musicians were searching for more secure employment, even if it meant a lower salary. Ostrander recalls that he took a cut in salary when he signed his contract with the New York Philharmonic.⁷⁰

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Sachs, 262.

⁷⁰Ostrander, interview by the writer.

Ostrander's employment with the New York Philharmonic began on October 1, 1946.⁷¹ Joining him in the new trombone section were Gordon Pulis, principal, and Lewis Van Haney, second.⁷² Pulis had played with the Philadelphia Orchestra under Leopold Stokowski, and prior to his employment with the New York Philharmonic was a staff trombonist at Radio City Music Hall.⁷³ Van Haney and Pulis were graduates of the Eastman School of Music where they had studied with the renowned trombone teacher, Emory Remington. Van Haney then joined the U.S. Army where he played in a military band until his release in 1943, whereupon he went to New York City to find work.⁷⁴

Pulis and Ostrander were the first of the three to sign contracts with the New York Philharmonic while Van Haney, who had the opportunity also to sign with the

⁷¹Peter Schoettler, New York, letter to the writer, Pensacola, FL, 18 July 1990.

⁷²Ostrander, interview by the writer.

⁷³Gordon Pulis, "An Interview with Gordon Pulis," interview by Bill Spilka, International Trombone Association Newsletter 5 (April 1978): 21-26.

⁷⁴Bruce Tracy, "Lewis Van Haney's Career," International Trombone Association Journal, 13 (1985): 8.

Philadelphia Orchestra, was the last.⁷⁵ Van Haney, who had no experience in orchestral playing, but had studied some with William Bell, tubist of the New York Philharmonic, was unable to decide which orchestra position to take. He sought advice from his former teacher, Remington, who recommended the New York Philharmonic because of the experience and well-established reputations of Pulis and Ostrander. They were more capable of helping Van Haney "survive" the pressures of professional playing as well as learn the music the orchestra was to perform.⁷⁶

Before rehearsals started for the 1946-47 season, the three trombonists were able to obtain their music for the first concert and immediately began to practice together to insure that they were ready for the first rehearsal.⁷⁷ This early practice was almost a necessity, since Van Haney was not as familiar with the music as the other two. They practiced in the basement of Carnegie Hall and Van Haney recalls that Ostrander kept records

⁷⁵"An Interview with Gordon Pulis, Lewis Van Haney, and Allen Ostrander," interview by Randy Kohlenberg, International Trombone Association Journal 11 (April 1983): 19.

⁷⁶Pulis, interview by Spilka.

⁷⁷Ostrander, interview by the writer.

of rehearsal dates in a little black book. These practice sessions occurred two to three times a week.⁷⁸ Every note of the music, no matter how easy, was practiced so that the three musicians articulated and released notes exactly the same way, as well as played stylistically alike. By rehearsing in this manner, they were able to make sure that Van Haney was prepared, the trombone section performed musically, and if a conductor wanted changes in style, they could simply make the changes because they were thinking as a single unit. These practices continued into the mid-1950's when orchestra rehearsals and performances increased and Pulis was removed from the section. Ostrander remarks that because of these extra rehearsals, they were ready for the concert before the orchestra's first rehearsal and were rarely asked by conductors to make changes in their interpretation of musical style.⁷⁹

Besides the orchestral music, the section worked on various trombone trios, two of which they memorized and always played just before going on stage for a concert.⁸⁰

⁷⁸Lewis Van Haney, Tucson, letter to the writer, Pensacola, FL, 1 August 1990.

⁷⁹Ostrander, interview by the writer.

⁸⁰Van Haney, letter.

Occasionally tubist William Bell joined them for four-part chorales.⁸¹ Ostrander also arranged some trombone trios from works of well-known composers such as Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, and Berlioz to help correctly interpret these composers' style.⁸²

In early 1947, Rodzinski resigned as musical director of the New York Philharmonic.⁸³ He was replaced by Bruno Walter who, because of his age and health, agreed to be musical advisor instead of musical director.⁸⁴ Ostrander regarded Walter as a fine conductor, particularly in his interpretations of works by the German Romantic composers.⁸⁵ This success in interpretations was partially the result of Walter's earlier position as an assistant to the composer-conductor Gustav Mahler. Walter knew Mahler as a close personal friend and wrote a biography of him based upon his experiences with the conductor.⁸⁶

⁸¹Ostrander, interview by the writer.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Howard Shanet, Philharmonic: A History of New York Orchestra (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1975), 304-305.

⁸⁴Ibid., 305.

⁸⁵Ostrander, interview by the writer.

⁸⁶Bruno Walter, Gustav Mahler, translated by Lotte Walter Lindt (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1957); reprint, New York: Schocken Books, 1974), V.

There are two recordings of the New York Philharmonic conducted by Walter that Ostrander considers to be excellent examples of the trombone section's performance abilities. The earliest one was made in 1947 while Walter was guest conducting Mahler's Symphony No. 5 in c[♯] minor prior to his appointment as musical advisor.⁸⁷ The trombone section's playing is similar to the previously discussed NBC Symphony recording, except the section's sound is more vibrant and the individual parts are better heard. This may be a result of different recording techniques, but in any case the performance exemplifies the high quality of playing the trombone section had achieved in a rather short time. The second was the 1951 recording of the final movement from Brahms' Fourth Symphony. Again, Walter conducted, but after his tenure as musical advisor had been finished.⁸⁸ This recording allows the listener to hear Ostrander's bass trombone playing clearly and demonstrates a smooth, musical approach

⁸⁷Gustav Mahler: Symphony No. 5, New York Philharmonic, conducted by Bruno Walter, phonodisc 32 26 0016, Odyssey, n.d.

⁸⁸Neville Cardus, Johannes Brahms: The Four Symphonies, New York Philharmonic conducted by Bruno Walter, phonodisc 32 36 007, Odyssey, 1954.

to phrasing. Both of these recordings with Walter are fine testimonies to the musicianship the trombone section had attained.

During the time of Walter's position as musical advisor from 1947 to 1949, the orchestra played under several guest conductors including Leopold Stokowski. Stokowski, or "Stokie" as Ostrander refers to him, was appointed conductor of the New York Philharmonic along with Dimitri Mitropoulos at the end of Walter's term in 1949.⁸⁹

Stokowski, as popular with the public as Toscanini and a rival for public attention,⁹⁰ had a particular liking of the trombone and tuba section. They were featured in some concerts as well as on commercial recordings produced by RCA, sometimes dubbed "Stokowski and his Orchestra,"⁹¹ This particular orchestra was chosen by Stokowski from some of New York City's finest musicians and included almost the entire brass section of the New York Philharmonic.⁹²

⁸⁹Shanet, 310.

⁹⁰Oliver Daniel, Stokowski: A Counterpoint of View (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1982), 951.

⁹¹Ostrander, interview by the writer.

⁹²Daniel, 539.

While Stokowski was guest conductor of the New York Philharmonic, he conducted a benefit concert in the Hotel Plaza for the orchestra on March 10, 1947. This concert featured the wind instrumentalists performing both in chamber ensembles and as soloists. The three trombonists and the tubist performed Beethoven's Drei Equale for four trombones with the tuba playing the fourth part, and the entire brass section played Godfrey Turner's Fanfare, Chorale, and Finale.⁹³

During Stokowski's tenure as conductor of the New York Philharmonic, the low brass section continued to practice together on concert music, trios, and quartets. All of the orchestra members were aware of their extra rehearsals, and one of them, Arcady Dubensky, often listened to them practice. Dubensky, a violinist who also had the reputation of being a fine composer and one of Stokowski's favorites,⁹⁴ began writing a piece for three trombones and tuba after they complained to him about the lack of good music for such an ensemble. On

⁹³"Special Concert for Members" (photocopy), Archives, New York Philharmonic, New York, 10 March 1947.

⁹⁴Ostrander, interview by the writer.

January 2, 1949, he completed a composition for them entitled Prelude, Toccata, and Fugue.⁹⁵

Stokowski heard them rehearsing Dubensky's composition and liked it so well that he wanted it performed in a concert.⁹⁶ He suggested that Dubensky add an orchestral accompaniment of only strings and woodwinds so that the other brass instruments would not detract from the trombones and tuba. He also suggested a new title, Concerto Grosso for Three Solo Trombones, Tuba, and Orchestra.⁹⁷

It received its world premiere on November 3, 1949, as the opening selection with the soloists standing in front of the New York Philharmonic and Stokowski conducting. According to a review of the concert, it proved to be a unique opener to an audience unaccustomed to hearing these instruments performing in extended solo roles. The work displayed the sound and technical capabilities of the low brass instruments, and the soloists were given credit for a smooth, finely polished performance that was well received by the audience.⁹⁸

⁹⁵Herbert F. Peyser, "Notes on the Program: Concerto Grosso for Three Solo Trombones, Tuba, and Orchestra" (photocopy), Archives, New York Philharmonic, New York, 3 November 1949.

⁹⁶Ostrander, interview by the writer.

⁹⁷H. Peyser.

⁹⁸Olin Downes, "Stokowski Offers Work by Dubensky," New York Times, 4 November 1949, sec. L, p.32.

Ostrander recalls the years he played for Stokowski as being very busy but enjoyable because of the opportunities for performing and the recognition given to the trombone section. The busy concert and recording schedules of both the New York Philharmonic and the Stokowski orchestras provided a better income for him after a salary cut when joining the New York Philharmonic.⁹⁹

In 1951, Dimitri Mitropoulos was appointed musical director of the New York Philharmonic after having served as co-conductor with Stokowski for the 1949-50 season and as conductor for 1950-51 when Stokowski stepped down as a co-conductor.¹⁰⁰ The position of musical director meant that not only was Mitropoulos to conduct the majority of the concerts, but he also had a voice in selecting guest conductors, repertoire, and musicians for the orchestra.¹⁰¹ The New York Philharmonic became increasingly more popular to an audience of varied musical tastes as it delved into popular and film music. At the same time Mitropoulos enjoyed popularity among the orchestra members.¹⁰²

⁹⁹Ostrander, interview by the writer.

¹⁰⁰Shanet, 310-311.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²Ostrander, interview by the writer.

Mitropoulos recognized the need for his orchestra to make sufficient income in order to live decently in a large city with high living expenses. The musicians needed job security, a comfortable salary that would supply them through the summer months when work was scarce, as well as medical and retirement benefits.¹⁰³ With these things in mind, Mitropoulos devised a concert schedule that included performances at New York City's Roxy Theatre. These concerts, billed as the New York Philharmonic's "first Broadway appearances," were presented before the showing of movies featuring such actors as Tyrone Powers and Orson Welles. The orchestra performed four forty-five minute concerts each day for eight days as an added attraction to the films. The music was chosen from popular favorites used for subscription concerts, such as Prokofiev's "Classical" Symphony and works by Verdi and Wagner. The success of these concerts can be measured by the number of people who came to hear them, over 200,000 in eight days. In comparison, they would have had to perform one hundred concerts at Carnegie Hall to draw that number of people.¹⁰⁴ Ostrander and his

¹⁰³Ibid.

¹⁰⁴Shanet, 313-319.

fellow orchestra members greatly appreciated these concerts for the additional income they provided.¹⁰⁵

Another way that the orchestra tried to increase its income was to extend the length of the subscription season, which at the time was twenty-eight weeks long plus a summer concert series of eight weeks that did not require the full orchestra.¹⁰⁶ The musicians were paid weekly salaries for the season only, which meant they had to spread a twenty-six to thirty-six week salary over fifty-two weeks. As a result of Mitropoulos' efforts and the music union's negotiations with the board of directors, the musicians' salaries increased. In addition, the extended seasons, extra concerts, and tours provided additional income.¹⁰⁷

At the time of Mitropoulos's term as musical director, Ostrander viewed him as a friend of the orchestra, particularly because of his efforts to provide performing opportunities to increase the musicians' income. Ostrander also believed that the orchestra was playing much better than in the past. Mitropoulos allowed the trombone section to play louder dynamics, something previous conductors had not allowed.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵Ostrander, interview by the writer.

¹⁰⁶Shanet, 315.

¹⁰⁷Ostrander, interview by the writer.

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

In retrospect, Ostrander now believes that the New York Philharmonic gave some rather sloppy performances. A few of the recordings made with Mitropoulos conducting, show a lack of good ensemble playing in the various sections of the orchestra with inconsistencies in precision, clarity, and intonation; all of which may be a result of Mitropoulos's unwillingness to discipline the orchestra during rehearsals.

Mitropoulos was able to increase his popularity with the public with more concerts which in turn increased his income. At the same time the orchestra may have lacked discipline due to the busy weekly performance schedule.¹⁰⁹

The trombone section of the New York Philharmonic was greatly admired and respected both by members of the orchestra and the various guest conductors. Ostrander credits their success to their willingness to practice together outside of the regular orchestra rehearsals and the camaraderie that resulted from these rehearsals. Pulis, who served as the principal trombonist, was not a dictatorial section leader, but rather served as a musical guide for the section to follow.¹¹⁰ Their extra

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

¹¹⁰Ibid.

rehearsals, at times lasting for several hours, caused Pulis' and Van Haney's endurance in the upper register to weaken. However, Ostrander, playing in the low register, was not fatigued and was always ready to continue.¹¹¹

Humorous incidents resulted because of their friendship and one illustration may also indicate some of the disciplinary problems under Mitropoulos. It seems that some of the orchestra members had become interested in playing various kinds of card games during rehearsal breaks and concert intermissions. The trombone section was one group that actively played card games and during one concert almost missed a composition they were to play. In this concert featuring Grieg's Piano Concerto in a minor, the trombonists were not needed for the piece performed prior to the concerto, so they went backstage to play cards. While playing they saw a stage hand and asked him to notify them when he was going to move the piano on stage for the concerto. To their surprise, he had already moved the piano, and the orchestra was ready to start. They quickly picked up their trombones and headed for their seats on stage. Ostrander went first, stooped over and holding his trombone above his head like

¹¹¹Van Haney, letter.

the periscope of a submarine; Van Haney followed, and being a very large individual marched directly to his seat as if he owned the stage; and Pulis meekly walked to his seat. Mitropoulos had already given the downbeat and the trombones had missed the opening chord of the concerto. After the concert, the trombonists were called to Mitropoulos's office to receive what turned out to be a gentle reprimand. Van Haney believes that under any other conductor, they might have been fired.¹¹²

By the mid-1950's, the three trombonists had stopped meeting for extra rehearsals because of an increase in orchestral rehearsals and performances. Although they still remained good friends, they did not have the closeness that allowed them to support each other emotionally as well as musically. Pulis had developed a drinking problem and had become an alcoholic. After finishing their trombone sectionals, they often went for refreshments at a club or bar, and no one recalls that Pulis had a problem at the time. Eventually Pulis's alcoholism so affected his performances that he was dismissed by the management.¹¹³ He was replaced by Edward Herman who had

¹¹²Ibid.

¹¹³Ostrander, interview by the writer.

been hired as assistant principal trombonist to help Pulis.¹¹⁴

In 1957, Leonard Bernstein, an occasional guest conductor with the New York Philharmonic, was named co-principal conductor along with Mitropoulos. For Mitropoulos, this announcement meant that he had been demoted from his role as musical director and had less say in the affairs of the orchestra. Music critics had questioned whether he had the ability to maintain the orchestra's morale and discipline, and some felt that he had already failed.¹¹⁵

During this time, Ostrander, along with Kauko Kahila, bass trombonist of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, became involved in the development of a new bass trombone. Ostrander had already worked with the C. G. Conn Company to make modifications on his instrument in 1939 and felt that more improvements were possible by adding a second valve pitched in E. When the modifications were made earlier with just the single valve, the low F was lost in first position, instead being replaced by E. A second

¹¹⁴Edward Herman, "A Conversation with Edward Herman," interview by Robert Thomas, International Trombone Association Journal 11 (April 1983): 17.

¹¹⁵Shanet, 325.

valve in E would allow the first valve to remain in F, therefore allowing both notes to be played in first position. Ostrander had begun working on a design for a double valve bass trombone when he learned from other trombonists that Kahila also was working on a design. Ostrander contacted Kahila regarding the design and discarded his own in favor of Kahila's.¹¹⁶

Kahila's plan was the result of his difficulty in playing the low B to F glissando in Bartok's Concerto for Orchestra.¹¹⁷ Since the Boston Symphony had given the world premiere in 1944,¹¹⁸ it had become an important selection in that orchestra's repertoire, and the glissando had remained a difficult passage for the bass trombonist.¹¹⁹

Kahila conceived his idea by laying out string on the floor of his apartment in the basic shape he wanted for the tubing that connected the two valves to the bell section and then measured the string for the precise

¹¹⁶Ostrander, interview by the writer.

¹¹⁷Kauko Kahila, interview by the writer, East Falmouth, MA, 31 July 1990, telephone.

¹¹⁸Charles Hamm, Music in the New World (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1983), 554.

¹¹⁹Kahila, interview by the writer.

length. Since he was playing a single valve bass trombone made by the Reynolds Musical Instrument Company of Cleveland, Ohio, he approached its engineers about making his design into a pilot model, and they agreed.¹²⁰

Through letters and telephone calls with Kahila, Ostrander and Counihan became involved, and by Christmas 1957, Reynolds had manufactured three pilot models and distributed them among the three men for testing. Two models were made with bells containing a higher copper content called red brass that produced a dark tone quality in the low register. The third, at Ostrander's request, had a lower copper content, making it a lemon or yellow brass, because he preferred a brighter sound in the lower register and a darker quality in the upper register.¹²¹

According to Ostrander, the three of them met to discuss changes in their pilot models in the winter of 1958 when the Boston Symphony had a concert in Carnegie Hall. Counihan suggested the use of rollers on the valves similar to those on saxophone keys to facilitate the thumb motion from the F valve to the E valve, while Ostrander wanted the braces around the valves restructured for better

¹²⁰Ibid.

¹²¹Ostrander, interview by the writer.

weight distribution. Ostrander continued to play his pilot model through that summer, taking it on the New York Philharmonic tour of South America. That fall it was sent back to the factory for the modifications he and Counihan had recommended.¹²²

The Reynolds double valve bass trombone was made available to the public for purchase in 1958 and became quite successful. Reynolds included a mouthpiece which Ostrander thinks was a copy of a German model not suited for the instrument. Also included with the purchase was a copy of Ostrander's 1956 method book, The F Attachment and Bass Trombone, which had a special cover featuring a picture of each of the three men on the back.¹²³

Although the book provides exercises for learning the use of the F valve, there are none for the E valve. It does have a brief paragraph in the explanatory notes in the book discussing how the tuning slide of the F valve on a single valve bass trombone can be adjusted to E.¹²⁴

Something that has concerned Ostrander throughout the years since the double valve bass trombone was developed is how he has received principal credit for

¹²²Ibid.

¹²³Ibid.

¹²⁴Allen Ostrander, The F Attachment and Bass Trombone (New York: Charles Colin, 1956), 30.

its design. Even among the three men, there are discrepancies on what contributions each made. For instance, Counihan claims that the concept was his idea and that he and a gentleman named Reinhardt from the Reynolds factory worked together on the design, with most of the actual design work being done by Reinhardt. He recalls that Ostrander and Kahila were developing some ideas for a design, but is now unable to remember what they were. Although Counihan used the pilot model of the Reynolds double valve bass trombone throughout his career with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, he never liked it because it did not play with enough resistance and he had wanted the second valve pitched in E flat instead of E.¹²⁵

Kahila and Ostrander agree for the most part in their recollection of events leading to the production of the double valve bass trombone. Kahila recalls that Counihan was not involved at all with the design, and the idea of rollers for the valves was Ostrander's. Kahila states that Counihan was given a pilot model because of his position in the Metropolitan Opera and his close professional relationship with Ostrander.¹²⁶

¹²⁵Louis Counihan, interview by the writer, Pownal, VT, 4 January 1991, telephone.

¹²⁶Kahila, interview by the writer.

Of the three accounts given, Ostrander's seems to be the most accurate since he recalls more details of what each one contributed and also specific events regarding meetings and correspondence. Another clue to the accuracy of Ostrander's account, although superficial, is his desire to see Kahila and not himself given credit for the ideas and the overall design. Ostrander is probably given credit because of his well-established reputation in a major orchestra and, more importantly, his bass trombone method books that he has written and published. While Kahila and Counihan were evidently equally talented bass trombonists, judging by their respective orchestras, they did not have the same recognition that Ostrander had. Ostrander even believes that Edward Kleinhammer, former bass trombonist of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, experimented with various designs¹²⁷ and as early as 1950 had an instrument repairman put one together for him.¹²⁸

Since 1958, the double valve bass trombone has gone through numerous changes and improvements, with virtually every instrument company manufacturing a variety of styles

¹²⁷Ostrander, interview by the writer.

¹²⁸Edward Kleinhammer, *The Art of Playing the Trombone* (Evanston, IL: Summy-Birchard Company, 1963), 53.

and sizes. Unfortunately, the F. A. Reynolds Company moved to Chicago to become the Chicago Musical Instrument Company¹²⁹ and, according to Ostrander, went out of business, making it difficult today to locate models of the Reynolds double valve bass trombone.¹³⁰ Kahila still owns his,¹³¹ and Counihan sold his when he retired from the Metropolitan Opera.¹³² Ostrander eventually bought a second one and for an experiment had the pilot model converted to a single valve instrument using the valve and tubing from a Conn bass trombone to see how it played.¹³³ This writer purchased the converted pilot model from him in 1978 for four hundred twenty-five dollars.¹³⁴ The second Reynolds bass trombone was sold to a bass trombonist from Japan sometime after 1983 when Ostrander quit playing because of a heart attack.¹³⁵

¹²⁹Robin Gregory, The Trombone (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973), 315.

¹³⁰Ostrander, interview by the writer.

¹³¹Kahila, interview by the writer.

¹³²Counihan, interview by the writer.

¹³³Ostrander, interview by the writer.

¹³⁴Allen Ostrander, Ithaca, New York, cash receipt to the writer, 3 February 1978.

¹³⁵Ostrander, interview by the writer.

During the late 1950's, Ostrander began teaching again when he was asked to serve as an adjunct instructor at the Hartt School of Music in Hartford, Connecticut, and Columbia University. He had not done much teaching in New York City since 1946, when the Juilliard School of Music had asked him to teach a bass trombone student while he was still a member of the NBC Symphony.¹³⁶

Ostrander decided to accept this teaching because he now had a family to support, and the ever-increasing high cost of living in the New York City area required the additional income. In 1954, he had married Ann Lomzik, a professional trumpet player with Freddy Shaeffer's All Girl Band, and had two children--Judy, born in 1956, and Ernest in 1959. He was paid by these schools according to the number of students he taught.¹³⁷

Because of his recognition and reputation, Ostrander discovered that he was able to make extra money by teaching on his own and charging his own fees. Several military and professional bass trombonists came to take a few lessons in order to correct and improve some particular aspect of their playing with this recognized master.¹³⁸ His

¹³⁶Ibid.

¹³⁷Ibid.

¹³⁸Ibid.

reputation eventually became internationally known because professional players such as Eliezer Aharoni, bass trombonist of the Jerusalem Radio Symphony, traveled great distances for lessons with him.¹³⁹

Music camps provided Ostrander opportunities to teach and earn extra money, and during the summers of 1956-60, he taught at the New England Music Camp in Oakland, Maine. Unlike the more advanced students he was used to teaching, this camp provided instruction for younger, high school musicians, using college students as counselors and well-known professional musicians as instructors.¹⁴⁰ For the counselors, it was a wonderful experience, since they not only received free room and board, but also free lessons from the instructor. The instructors also performed with the various student ensembles and one counselor, John Mead, recalls Ostrander's flexibility with styles when he played first trombone with the camp jazz band using his bass trombone.¹⁴¹

When the 1957-58 season of the New York Philharmonic began, the board of directors announced that Bernstein

¹³⁹Eliezer Aharoni, *New Method for the Modern Bass Trombone* (Jerusalem, Israel: Noga Music, 1975), 2.

¹⁴⁰Ostrander, interview by the writer.

¹⁴¹John H. Mead, interview by the writer, Huntington, WV, 8 July 1990, telephone.

was appointed musical director for the following season. Although Mitropoulos was still a co-principal conductor for the current season, even that season belonged to Bernstein since he was also named musical director of the children's concerts.¹⁴²

Under Bernstein, more performance opportunities were developed for the New York Philharmonic. In early 1958 under his leadership, the orchestra began televising its Young People's Concerts, meeting with considerable success with music critics who had thought that the concerts had not been given proper priority.¹⁴² That same summer the orchestra made an international tour to South America, a trip Ostrander remembers quite well because their airplane was surrounded by armed guards during a revolution.¹⁴⁴ In addition, the orchestra made many more recordings with Bernstein as conductor.¹⁴⁵

It is doubtful that Bernstein organized these performances for the financial benefit of the orchestra's

¹⁴²Shanet, 325.

¹⁴³Ibid., 328.

¹⁴⁴Ostrander, interview by the writer.

¹⁴⁵Shanet, 341.

members. Nevertheless, the musicians gladly reaped the rewards, particularly from television and recording contracts. He was supportive of the musicians and treated them with respect, but at times stayed somewhat aloof from them.¹⁴⁶

The concert repertoire broadened while Bernstein was musical director, with a greater emphasis on twentieth century American music including those works that showed jazz influences. Bernstein's own compositions, jazz and popular styles that appealed to a wider audience, were frequently performed.¹⁴⁷ The fact that Bernstein knew little about the bass trombone and its popularity or tone quality was made evident by a conversation Ostrander had with him. During a break in a rehearsal of Carl Nielsen's Flute Concerto, Ostrander asked Bernstein a question regarding some aspect of interpretation of the bass trombone part which has a significant solo role with the flute. In the course of the discussion, Ostrander discovered that Bernstein did not realize that his bass trombone even had one valve, let alone two. He thought that Ostrander played the old British G bass trombone with its extra long hand slide, small bell, and no valve.

¹⁴⁶Ostrander, interview by the writer.

¹⁴⁷Ibid.

Bernstein obviously had not given much attention to what he saw or heard from the bass trombone, considering that Ostrander's bass trombone had a very large ten-inch bell, extra tubing, and a different timbre from the British bass trombone.¹⁴⁸

Ostrander found Bernstein difficult to follow as a conductor because he became so emotionally involved with the music that beat patterns and cues were lost. At times, the orchestral playing became sloppy and interpretations were out of character for the correct style in a concert. Ostrander believes that this was due to a lack of attention to details such as intonation and phrasing during rehearsals. What Ostrander liked about Bernstein was his infectious enthusiasm and energy which he brought to rehearsals.¹⁴⁹ In a discussion of Bernstein's 1958 recording of Stravinsky's The Rite of Spring with the New York Philharmonic, Martin Bookspan remarked that Bernstein ". . . already had the orchestra playing for him like 110 possessed demons."¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸Ibid.

¹⁴⁹Ibid.

¹⁵⁰Martin Bookspan, 101 Masterpieces of Music and Their Composers, revised ed. (Garden City, NY: Dolphin Books, 1973), 402.

Ostrander's fondest memories of the New York Philharmonic under Bernstein were the summer tours. The orchestra had previously toured various sections of the United States, but under Bernstein it made some international tours. Ostrander participated in all of those except for the 1959 tour of Europe and the Near East, including Russia. His wife was pregnant with their second child and since the baby was due during the time of the tour, he was granted permission for a leave of absence.¹⁵¹

One of the compositions performed on the tour was Shostakovich's Symphony No. 5 in d minor, one of Ostrander's favorites because of the important bass trombone part. He was disappointed in not being able to perform it with the orchestra on the tour.¹⁵² When the orchestra returned, they went to Boston to record the piece in Symphony Hall¹⁵³ with Ostrander playing bass trombone, at Bernstein's request.¹⁵⁴ The recording is an important document of Ostrander's years as the New York Philharmonic's bass trombonist under Bernstein, since he

¹⁵¹Ostrander, interview by the writer.

¹⁵²Ibid.

¹⁵³Bookspan, 364.

¹⁵⁴Ostrander, interview by the writer.

can be heard in some solo sections of the scherzo and the final movement. Ostrander considers this recording one of Bernstein's finest with regard to the New York Philharmonic's interpretative abilities.¹⁵⁵

In 1966, Ostrander was appointed trombone instructor at the Juilliard School of Music once again,¹⁵⁶ and remained in that position until 1968. While on the faculty, he taught approximately seven students, including some tenor trombonists as well as bass trombonists. Ostrander claims he did not particularly enjoy teaching, but did it mainly for the additional income. By this time he took very few private students because the New York Philharmonic's concert and recording schedule had increased so much that he was playing with them almost year around.¹⁵⁷

The year 1968 not only saw Ostrander leave the Juilliard School of Music, but also marked some changes in his private life. Because of some differences and disagreements with his wife, they divorced after fourteen years of marriage. They had lived in the New Jersey suburbs of New York City most of their married lives

¹⁵⁵Ibid.

¹⁵⁶New York Times, 24 September 1966, Sec. IV, p.12.

¹⁵⁷Ostrander, interview by the writer.

because the cost of living was less expensive and there was less crime, providing a better environment for rearing children. After the divorce, Ostrander continued to live in New Jersey until his retirement in 1975.¹⁵⁸

At the end of the 1968-69 season, Bernstein stepped down as musical director of the New York Philharmonic to pursue his own interests in conducting opera and composing music for the theater. He was given the position of Laureate Conductor, an honor that still allowed him a close affiliation with the orchestra and provided him opportunities as a guest conductor. George Szell, musical director of the Cleveland Orchestra, was appointed musical advisor and senior guest conductor until such a time as the board of directors of the New York Philharmonic were able to find a new musical director.¹⁵⁹

In the summer 1969, after a brief search, the board of directors announced Pierre Boulez to be musical director beginning with the 1971-72 season. The interim period was filled with a variety of guest conductors, including Boulez.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸Ibid.

¹⁵⁹Shanet, 363-364.

¹⁶⁰Ibid., 365.

Boulez's appointment met with resistance from the New York Philharmonic's musicians. Although they had yet to play under his conducting, they already were aware of his unusual conducting techniques and knew of the type of music he was interested in performing. According to Ostrander, there are no secrets among musicians in New York City who freely talk to one another about the abilities, or rather, the lack of abilities in other musicians, particularly conductors. Boulez's reputation for preferring avant-garde music had preceded him even before he started guest conducting.¹⁶¹ The orchestra's musicians preferred traditional music and were skeptical not only of the literature he might program, but also of his conducting abilities of the standard repertoire and his approach to rehearsals. Apparently, he lacked the warmth and enthusiasm Bernstein brought to rehearsals. Ostrander recalls Boulez being referred to by some as "the French Correction," alluding to the popular movie The French Connection.¹⁶² Supposedly one individual, learning of Boulez's appointment, remarked that "the iceman cometh."¹⁶³

¹⁶¹Ostrander, interview by the writer.

¹⁶²Ibid.

¹⁶³Joan Peyser, Boulez (New York: Schirmer Books, 1976), 208.

Boulez, according to Ostrander, had little or no concept of what an orchestra was to sound like playing traditional music because he did not understand the melodic phrases or how to conduct them. Because of Boulez's interest in contemporary music, the orchestra began performing more of it and, in turn, the attendance at concerts dropped. Ostrander felt that Boulez used the orchestra as a vehicle to promote the avant-garde music he espoused and that the orchestra's musicianship along with its reputation suffered.¹⁶⁴

This writer recalls, while attending the New York Brass Conference for Scholarships in January 1975, hearing Ostrander describe a concert of Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 5 in e minor which Boulez conducted as a nightmare. Boulez evidently did not give downbeats in his conducting nor use beat patterns, using instead small gestures with his hands and fingers, making it difficult for the orchestra to stay together.

In 1973, the musicians of the New York Philharmonic went on strike for a better salary and an improved retirement pension program. Ostrander believes that the strike, supported by the American Federation of Musicians Local 802, was started because members of the major orchestras

¹⁶⁴Ostrander, interview by the writer.

throughout the United States, were comparing their salaries and benefits in an attempt to gain more from their respective orchestra boards. He suspects that the boards of directors of these orchestras agreed not to allow any increase, thus resulting in the strike by the New York Philharmonic.¹⁶⁵

Ostrander supported the strike because he was loyal to the union since it provided protection from cuts in his salary and benefits. He also knew that he was nearing the orchestra's mandatory retirement age of sixty-five and wanted to be sure his benefits and pension were enough to live on when he did retire.¹⁶⁶ His loyalty to the union was demonstrated by his willingness to carry a picket sign in front of Philharmonic Hall of the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, home of the New York Philharmonic. Although all of the orchestra's members were assigned times to carry picket signs, many did not; but Ostrander always carried one during his scheduled time, although he was often the only one there.¹⁶⁷

Because of the negative changes in the orchestra's quality of playing and its repertoire, and the worsening

¹⁶⁵Ibid.

¹⁶⁶Ibid.

¹⁶⁷Van Haney, letter.

inflation and crime rates in the New York City area, Ostrander grew weary of orchestral life and wanted to retire before he was sixty-five years old. But he decided to wait until after the strike was over to see how the pension and benefits would change if he waited. Eventually, before the season was over, the orchestra succeeded in achieving its goals for the strike, particularly for a substantial increase in the retirement pension.¹⁶⁸ As a result of the improvements, he made the decision to retire at the required time;¹⁶⁹ thus he retired at the end of his contract year on September 21, 1975, having played with the New York Philharmonic for twenty-nine years.¹⁷⁰

On March 23, 1975, the New York Philharmonic held a brief ceremony, during an intermission of a concert, to honor Ostrander and double bassist Robert Brennand¹⁷¹ by presenting them each a watch and plaque in recognition of their combined seventy-one years of service. Afterward a reception was given by the management with several

¹⁶⁸Ostrander, interview by the writer.

¹⁶⁹Ibid.

¹⁷⁰Schoettler, letter.

¹⁷¹"Two Members of the New York Philharmonic Honored at Retirement," leaflet, 25 March 1975.

dignitaries present, though Ostrander does not recall Boulez being in attendance.¹⁷²

According to New York Philharmonic archives assistant, Peter Schoettler, Ostrander's final concert at Avery Fischer Hall, formerly Philharmonic Hall, was June 29, 1975. The performance was one of the so-called "Rug" Concerts¹⁷³ given during one week of June in which the first floor seats of the hall were removed and replaced with carpet creating an informal environment and allowing the audience to sit on the floor.¹⁷⁴ Boulez conducted and the contemporary repertoire consisted of works by Mahler, Debussy, Stravinsky, and Ligeti.¹⁷⁵

After this series, the orchestra had a few days off before it was to leave on a summer tour of Europe. Ostrander used the time to move his belongings to his retirement home in Ithaca, New York, chosen for its serene, small town atmosphere and the musical opportunities offered by Ithaca College, formerly Ithaca Conservatory, and Cornell University. He then made the tour with the orchestra and returned to New York City in early August

¹⁷²Ostrander, interview by the writer.

¹⁷³"The Rugs Concerts" (photocopy), Archives, New York Philharmonic, New York, 29 June 1975.

¹⁷⁴J. Peyser, 425.

¹⁷⁵"The Rugs Concerts," 29 June 1975.

and immediately went to Ithaca, having taken care of all his business matters before the tour.¹⁷⁶

Since retirement, Ostrander remains active as a teacher, composer, and arranger. He served as a visiting instructor of trombone at Ithaca College for the 1976-77 academic year, where he also directed its trombone choir. During his orchestral career, he composed and arranged numerous method books, etudes, and solos for bass and tenor trombone, to be discussed in detail later, and continues this work in retirement having some of his works published. His interest in composing was inspired by the need of students who wanted to improve their playing but did not necessarily have the talent to become professional players. For them he wrote material aimed at correcting the average trombonist's problems.¹⁷⁷

Ostrander continued to practice his trombone for his own enjoyment and since he was still being called on to give workshops. He also played with Karel Husa's Cayuga Chamber Orchestra of Ithaca when he was needed. For practice material, he used his own etudes and solos as well as other etudes such as Marcel Bitsch's Quinze Etudes de Rythme for tenor trombone, which Ostrander edited for

¹⁷⁶Ostrander, interview by the writer.

¹⁷⁷Ibid.

bass trombone but never published. In 1983, he suffered a mild heart attack, causing him to stop playing the trombone for good. He still lives in Ithaca where he tends to some gardening, works with trombone students at Ithaca College, and does some traveling.¹⁷⁸

Ostrander enjoyed a prolific career with the different orchestras, having performed under many of the greatest conductors of the world. He modestly attributes the development of his reputation over the span of forty years of orchestral playing to good luck and knowing the right people at the right time, not necessarily to his ability to play the bass trombone.

Although Ostrander was, indeed, the leader of the modern school of orchestral bass trombone playing, his own humble attitude insists that others such as Lillibach, Kahila, and Kleinhammer deserve the credit. Ostrander serves as an example to young musicians how diligent hard work and a good determined spirit can help a musician to be successful in his chosen field.

¹⁷⁸Ibid.



Figure 1. New York Philharmonic Trombone and Tuba Section, circa 1948. Left to right: Gordon Pulis, Lewis Van Haney, Allen Ostrander, William Bell. Photograph courtesy of the New York Philharmonic Archives.



Figure 2. Allen E. Ostrander, 1959. Photograph courtesy of the New York Philharmonic Archives.



Figure 3. New York Philharmonic Trombone Section, circa 1968. Left to right: Allen Ostrander, Gilbert Cohen, Edwin Erwin, Edward Herman. Photograph courtesy of the New York Philharmonic Archives.

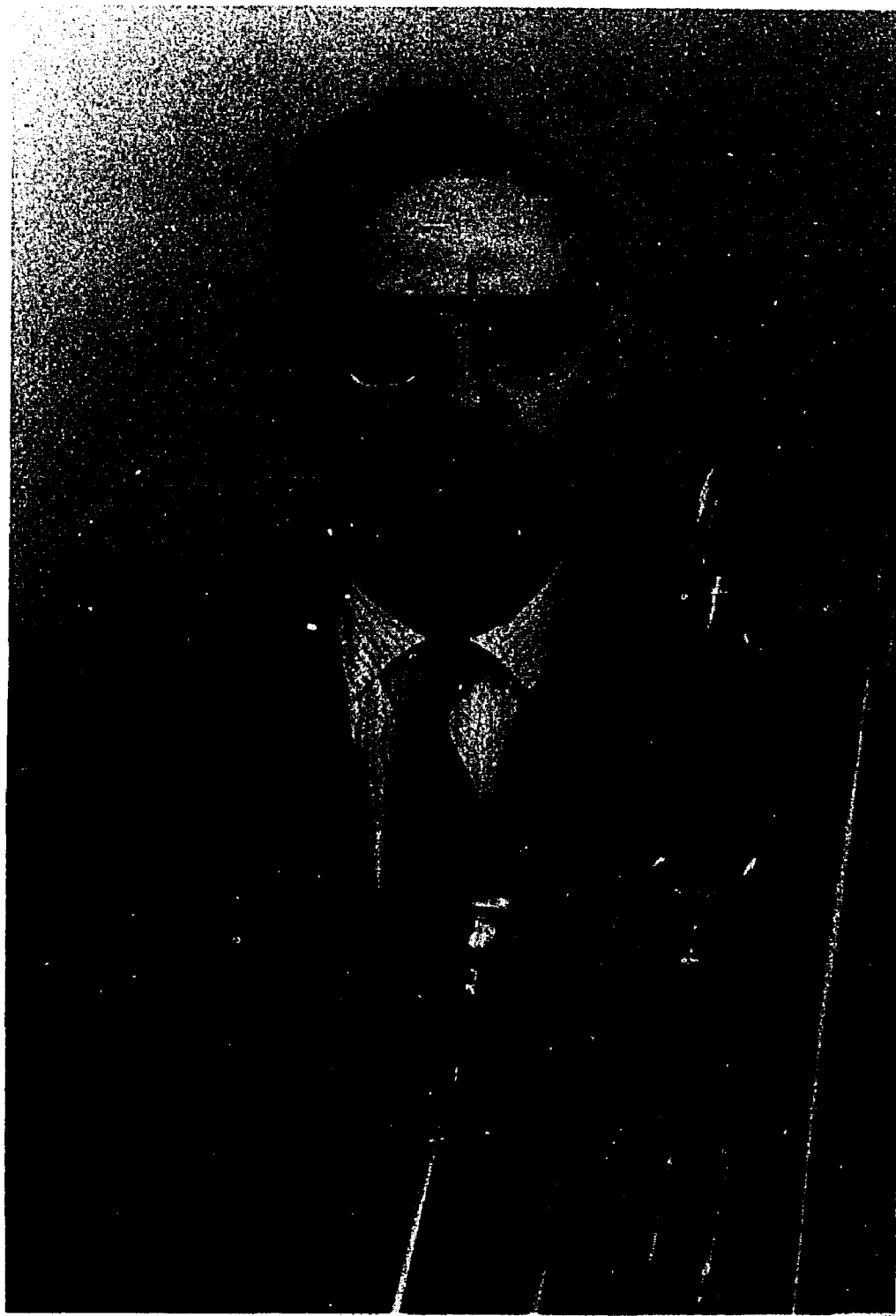


Figure 4. Allen E. Ostrander, 1970. Photograph courtesy of the New York Philharmonic Archives.



Figure 5. Allen E. Ostrander, 1974. Photograph courtesy of the New York Philharmonic Archives.

CHAPTER 4

OSTRANDER AS COMPOSER AND ARRANGER

Perhaps more than his career as a professional bass trombonist, the music he composed, arranged, or edited throughout his lifetime helped Ostrander earn his reputation. He wrote several bass trombone method books, etudes, and a few solos as well as arranged or composed similar works for the tenor trombone that span a period of over fifty years.¹ Since he was a bass trombonist, the works discussed will be limited to those for the bass trombone, beginning with the methods and etudes and followed by the solos. Also, the many sacred arias he arranged for himself to play for church services will be included.

As mentioned earlier, Ostrander did not care much for teaching, and although he did give some private instruction and taught at some schools, he preferred to concentrate on improving his own playing with the orchestras. When the Juilliard School of Music contacted him about teaching a bass trombone student in the spring of 1946 while he was still with the NBC Symphony, he had not taught anyone since the tenor trombone student during the 1937-38 season with the Pittsburgh Symphony. Ostrander did not know why

¹The following information is taken from a tape recorded interview with Ostrander, 13-16 January 1990.

Juilliard called him, but he agreed to teach the individual—Julian Menken, a bass trombonist—for the additional income.

For the first few lessons, Ostrander used Gardell Simons's method book for the tenor trombone for practice material, and although it was beneficial to Menken, Ostrander needed something to help him with his bass trombone playing. Ostrander began writing out bass trombone exercises on manuscript paper, taking them to Menken's lessons, and making changes in the material during the lessons. Some of it that did not seem to work at all was discarded. Ostrander got the idea to publish the material and decided to show it to Samuel Lewis, second trombonist of the NBC Symphony, for his opinion. Lewis liked the idea and suggested that Ostrander remove the V's over the notes indicating when to use the valve because when playing orchestral music there were no such markings. He following Lewis's suggestion and instead wrote instructions for some of the exercises.

Ostrander secured the copyright for his manuscript and gave it the title The Bass Trombone and F Attachment for Tenor Trombone. In the fall of 1946, he approached the M. Baron Company, a music publishing corporation in the New York City area, about the possibility of printing the material and also distributing it for sale. Maurice Baron,

one of the owners, was hesitant and asked if there was a market for a bass trombone method book. To find out, Ostrander wrote to the C. G. Conn Company of Elkhart, Indiana, to ask them how many bass trombones they estimated were being played in the United States. (He chose this company because he was playing a Conn bass trombone and thought they probably sold the most.) Conn estimated that there were likely fewer than five hundred bass trombones, including tenor trombones with the F attachment. Upon learning this, Baron did not think it was feasible to print the books because the expense of printing manuscript was costly and the company would not be able to sell enough copies to cover the printing costs. Ostrander relates that in those days the copying process was difficult compared to modern photocopying techniques used today. It was possible to write the book on transparent paper and take it to a copier, who then printed out a single copy. Baron agreed to this method of printing and became the sole agent for the book. When an order came, Ostrander made a copy and Baron sold it for him. The original book cost ten dollars (see figure 6), a rather large sum at the time, considering that other tenor trombone methods cost less than two dollars. Baron told him to charge that amount since nobody else had a bass trombone method book to sell. There were very few orders for the book from the beginning, and within two years he stopped offering it.

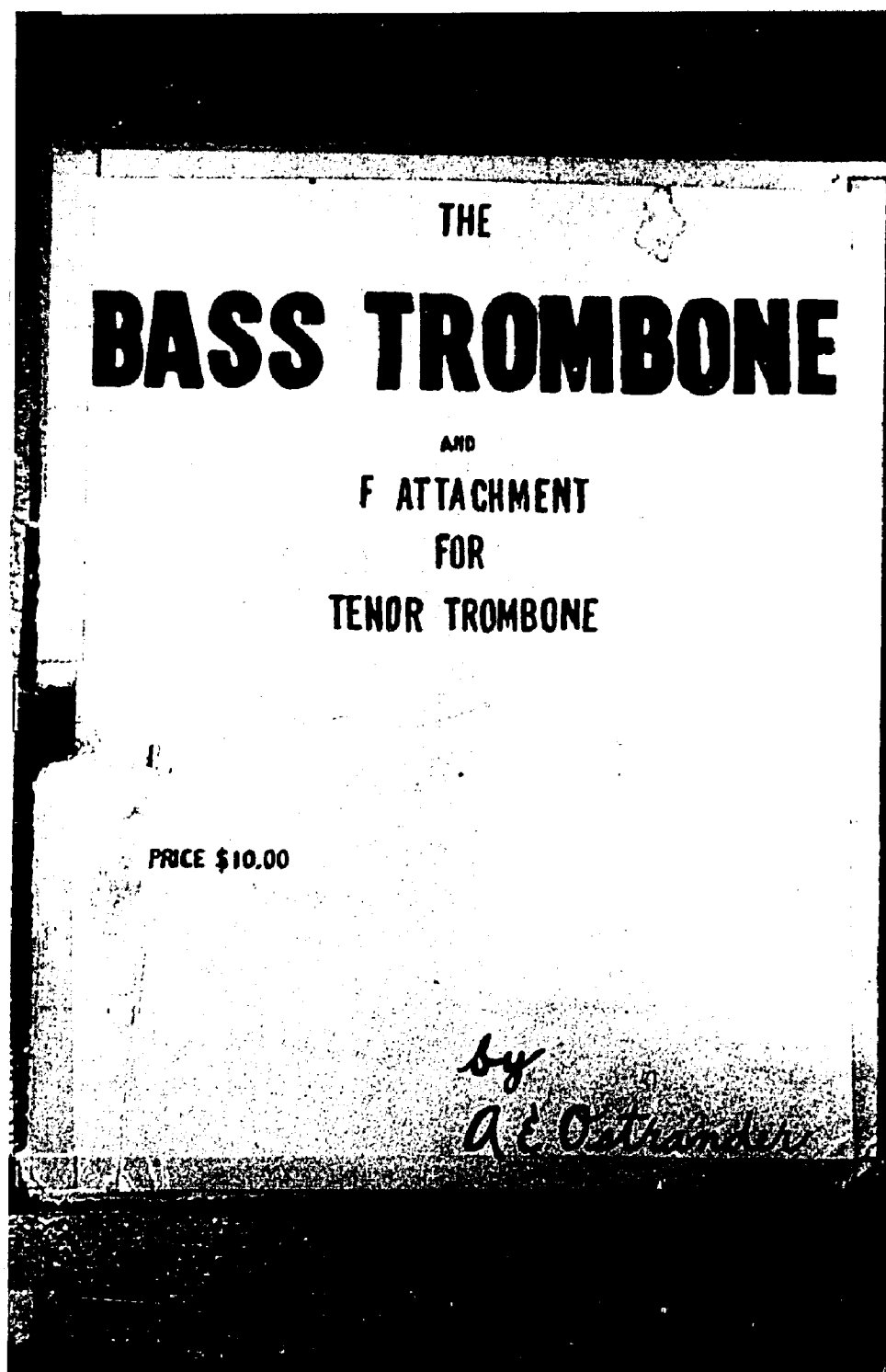


Figure 6. Original cover of Ostrander's first method book. (Photograph by the writer.)

In 1948, Ostrander wrote to the publishers, Carl Fischer, Incorporated, in New York City, to ask them if they might be interested in publishing his book, telling them what it was for and what was in it. They agreed to publish it with Carl Fischer securing the copyright and sending the manuscript to Belgium where they had the necessary equipment to print it. When proofs were sent to Ostrander to check for errors, he noticed that three pages were missing. Somehow Fischer had lost these pages in the printing process. They told him to add three more and it took two years to straighten the problem out with Fischer. Ostrander's bass trombone method book, the first of its kind in the United States,² is currently available from Carl Fischer at the price of eight dollars and fifty cents³ and is now entitled Method for Bass Trombone and F Attachment for Tenor Trombone.⁴ Although the current price is similar to the original price of ten dollars, the writer purchased a copy in the late 1960's

²Thomas G. Everett, Annotated Guide to Bass Trombone Literature, 3d ed., Brass Research Series, ed. Stephen L. Glover, No. 6 (Nashville: The brass Press, 1985), 69.

³Robert King, Brass Players' Guide (North Easton, MA: Robert King Music Sales, Inc., 1990), 69.

⁴Ostrander, interview by the writer.

for three dollars illustrating how much cheaper it was for Carl Fischer to publish the book. Ostrander dedicated the book to Walter Lillibach because he had taught Ostrander everything he knew about playing the bass trombone in that twenty-minute lesson in 1935⁵ discussed in the previous chapter.

When Ostrander wrote the material for Menken's lessons, he knew that the most important thing for him to learn was how to use the valve. He divided the book into three parts: Part I is for using the F valve, Part II for the flat F adjustment in order to get the low C in tune, and Part III for the E valve when the F attachment tuning slide was fully extended.⁶

Ostrander first wrote some text to explain where the positions using the F valve were in comparison to the regular positions. Using his own drawing of the slide, he illustrated where these various positions were on the slide. He then drew notes on a staff to indicate when he used the valve for playing orchestral music, commenting that the complete harmonic series was possible.⁷

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Allen Ostrander, Method for Bsss Trombone and Attachment for Tenor Trombone (New York: Carl Fischer, Inc.), 1956, 2.

Throughout the book there is written text describing various playing techniques including slide positions, articulation, slide control, and intonation. Ostrander considers the text material for each of his books to be more important than the music in them because the student would not learn the material correctly unless he read the text.⁸

In Part I, the largest of the three sections, Ostrander wrote short, simple exercises for developing coordination of the left thumb for the valve in first position and then gave a few brief studies incorporating the use of the position with the valve. This procedure is used for each of the six slide positions using the F attachment and is then followed by a set of "Progressive Studies," chromatic scales, triads, arpeggios, pedal tones, and orchestral excerpts. Part II is written similarly but contains fewer study pieces, while Part III is just text with the slide illustration similar to the one found in Part I. The end of the book contains major and minor scales written for the low range of the base trombone and a low tone arpeggio study. It should be noted that the

⁸Ostrander, interview by the writer.

slide illustrations are exact reproductions of Ostrander's own drawings.⁹

The material that Ostrander used for study pieces came from a variety of sources including piano music, orchestral music, Simons's method book, and a few of his own original compositions. As he prepared material for Menken's weekly lessons, he found it necessary to contrive exercises for the notes leading to and from the valve notes, thus making what he calls "loaded" exercises.¹⁰

Some of the works in the method, all untitled except for those that are actual orchestral excerpts, were adaptations of piano pieces from Robert Schumann's Clavierstücke für die Jugend, and other works were modeled after some of Mendelssohn's piano pieces. Ostrander is unsure why he chose the Schumann piano pieces, but it is possible that he remembered playing them when he took piano lessons from his mother or at the Ithaca Conservatory. The piano pieces by Mendelssohn were examples in a form and analysis textbook he used while a student at the conservatory.¹¹ All of these were chosen because he felt that they were

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

adaptable for setting up types of problems a bass trombonist encountered in orchestral playing, but at the same time were melodic.

Ostrander does not recall the titles of the Schumann pieces he used, but by comparing them with the score of Clavierstücke für die Jugend, it is possible to make some assumptions regarding some of those used. In one of his etudes, he probably used "Soldatenmarsch," adapting it first by changing the key from G major to F major, allowing for more use of second space C rather than third line D and providing opportunities to use the valve. Also, he added the note C, replacing other pitches in the piece and increasing valve use; he made frequent dynamic changes, lowered the octave placement of some pitches, and revised the melodic line of the piano part to make it more musical on the bass trombone. Ostrander's adaptation and "Soldatenmarsch" contain forty-eight measures (see figures 7 and 8).

For another etude, Ostrander may have used "Kleiner Morgenwanderer," in which he once again changed keys by transposing the piece from A major to C major and reversed the direction of the pitches so that second line B and second space C were consecutive—this allowed for greater use of the valve in this type of situation. He remembered changing the time signature from $\frac{2}{4}$ to $\frac{4}{8}$ so that the student



Figure 7. Reprinted by permission, from Ostrander, Method for Bass Trombone and F Attachment for Tenor Trombone, page 4, no. 5, copyright 1956 by Carl Fischer, Inc.

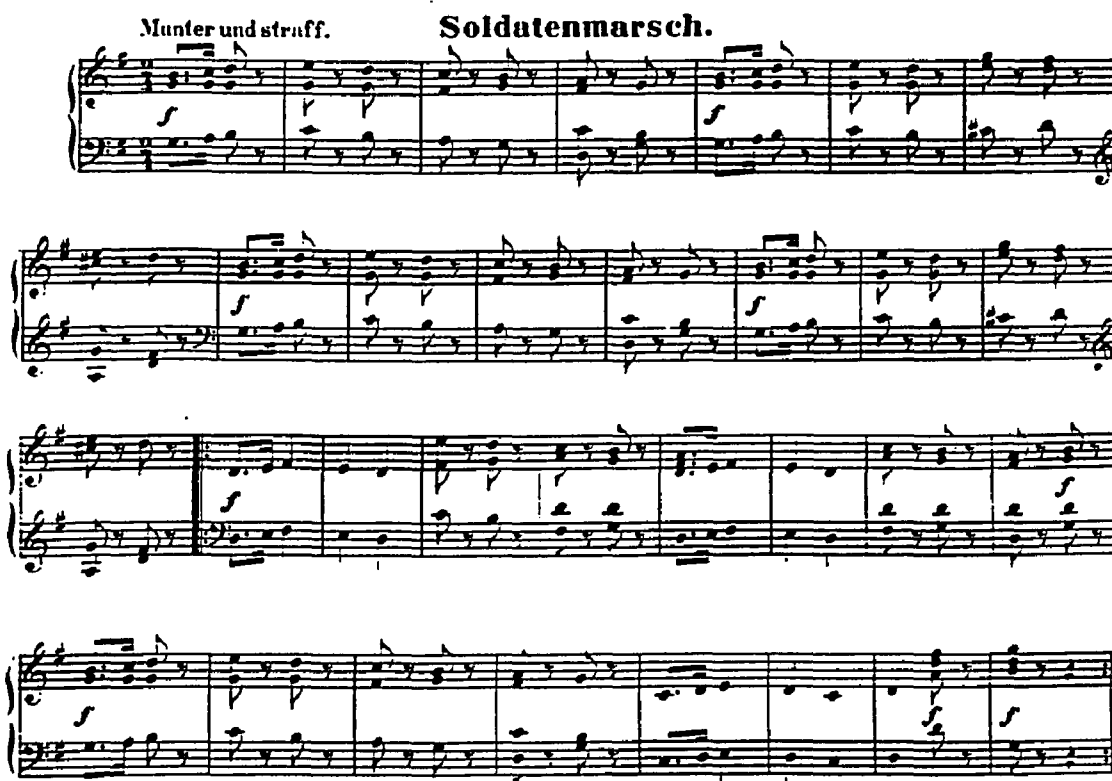


Figure 8. Reprinted from Robert Schumann, Piano Music of Robert Schumann, series II, pages 131-132, Dover Publications (New York).

learned to play infrequently-used time signatures.¹² During his career, Ostrander kept a record of the different time signatures he found in methods and etudes, as well as the pages they were on, simply for the purpose of being able to tell students where to find them if they were having difficulty playing a particular odd meter and needed the practice.¹³ Only two dynamics are used in the etude (see figures 9 and 10), forte and piano with a few crescendos.

Ostrander's choice of material for his second and third progressive studies came from Mendelssohn's Songs Without Words, which Ostrander had used as a textbook himself in a required class in form and analysis while a student at the conservatory.¹⁴ He does not remember which songs he used for either of them. For the second study, he recalls that the time signature of the original was in $\frac{6}{8}$, and he changed it to $\frac{2}{4}$ because it worked well for making every phrase start on an anacrusis, a type of phrasing with which he thought trombonists had trouble.¹⁵

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid.

Allegro risoluto

f Play all low C's and B's with valve unless otherwise marked.

p *f*

p *f* *p* *f*

Figure 9. Reprinted, by permission, from Ostrander, Method for Bass Trombone and F Attachment for Tenor Trombone, page 6, no. 6, copyright 1956 by Carl Fischer, Inc.

Kleiner Morgenwanderer.

Frisch und kräftig.

The musical score for 'Kleiner Morgenwanderer' is presented in six systems of grand staves (treble and bass clef). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The first system begins with a forte (f) dynamic. The second system continues the melody. The third system features a piano (p) dynamic. The fourth system includes a piano (p) dynamic and a crescendo leading to a fortissimo (ff) dynamic. The fifth system is marked with a first ending bracket and a second ending bracket, with the word 'Schwächer.' (weaker) above the second ending. The sixth system concludes the piece with a mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic.

Figure 10. Reprinted from Robert Schumann, *Piano Music of Robert Schumann*, series II, page 147, Dover Publications (New York).

The key signature of the third study contains seven flats. Ostrander comments that throughout the method there are key signatures which one might not necessarily see in solos, but may find in orchestral music.¹⁶ This particular study piece has been used by bass trombonists to play for orchestral auditions, and Ostrander recalls that one bass trombonist played it for Stokowski. The gentleman won the audition, and Stokowski remarked that he liked the melodic aspects of the piece.¹⁷

Since Ostrander was using Gardell Simons's method book with Menken and liked it, he included some of its material in his own method. Simons's method was an adaptation of a vocal method by Marchesi while the pieces Ostrander used were exercises commonly associated with vocal warm-ups. All of these were adapted to keys that enabled the F attachment to be used and some were altered by lengthening them or changing some rhythmic values. Ostrander recalls Simons telling him that his niece, Charlotte Simons, was studying voice in Philadelphia at the Curtis Institute of Music while Simons was a member of the Philadelphia Orchestra. Charlotte's teacher used

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

the Marchesi vocal method for lesson material, and as Simons listened to her practice, he decided that it was material usable for the trombone as well.¹⁸

The bulk of Ostrander's method either contains orchestral excerpts of bass trombone parts or arrangements of orchestral excerpts combined together, because this was the material with which he was most familiar and he had little time to prepare his own. All the excerpts used, whether as originally written or as arrangements, were what he considered standard repertoire at the time. Ostrander refers to the arrangements as parodies because of the humorous ways he added notes or combined excerpts to make them more melodic. Some of the pieces in his method use only the rhythms and style markings, such as those taken from the bass trombone part of Rachmaninoff's second piano concerto. A great deal of additional material was added that sounds similar to the piano solo part as well as some of the other orchestral instruments.¹⁹

An example of Ostrander's use of orchestral excerpts is the thirteenth progressive study, where he combined extractions from four different orchestral excerpts—the

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

third movement of Tchaikovsky's sixth symphony, the finale of Elgar's Enigma Variations, the overture to Rossini's opera, La Gazza Ladra, and Grainger's Molly on the Shore, and returning to La Gazza Ladra (see figure 11). Molly on the Shore was taken from an arrangement of this tune he played while he was a member of the National Symphony Orchestra.²⁰

There are few notes changed or added to this study, and those used stay in the same rhythm. An example of this is in the first phrase in which Ostrander kept Tchaikovsky's rhythm of four eighth notes followed by eighth rests on each beat, leaving the pitches of beats one and two G as Tchaikovsky had them. Ostrander changed the pitches on beats three and four from G to B and D, respectively, creating an arpeggio leading up to fourth space G at the end of the phrase. The entire phrase is repeated and this time it has different valve markings to demonstrate other possible uses of the valve.²¹ He also reversed the order of the phrases to make a better transition to the Elgar excerpt and allowed the piece to stay in the same key. When the other excerpts were used,

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ostrander, Method for Bass Trombone and F Attachment for Tenor Trombone 29-30.

Allegro molto vivace

13

fff

f

fff

fff

fff

p

f

p

f

p

f

p

f

p

Figure 11. Reprinted, by permission, from Ostrander,
Method for Bass Trombone and F Attachment for Tenor
Trombone, pages 29-30, no. 13, copyright 1956 by
 Carl Fischer, Inc.

new key signatures were employed, but these were the ones found for the actual excerpt.²²

The fifth progressive study demonstrates Ostrander's use of a single excerpt as an etude using material from the bass trombone part of the finale of Brahms's Fourth Symphony.²³ Again, the rhythmic configuration is much the same, but by including scales and arpeggios the piece is more melodic and interesting. Perhaps the most interesting part of this piece is the legato and staccato markings, which were the ones Toscanini used for the woodwinds in Brahms's Third Symphony.²⁴

Not all study pieces using orchestral excerpts were from bass trombone parts: some were borrowed from other instruments. The fourth progressive study was taken from string bass parts of two Bach chorale arrangements which the NBC Symphony played under a guest conductor from the Baltimore Symphony.²⁵ It is another of Ostrander's parodies and was written so that the bass trombonist could develop the mechanical feel of the string bass bow in

²²Ostrander, interview by the writer.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid.

the right arm as he moved the slide. Ostrander believed that there were major similarities between the use of the slide and the bow of a stringed instrument and even today thinks trombonists should learn to play a stringed instrument to develop a smooth, sweeping motion with the right arm, as he did at the Ithaca Conservatory.²⁶

The study pieces which were originally written by Ostrander were done to demonstrate certain problems in using the valve or to help the bass trombone student with some particular area such as the pedal tone register.²⁷ These compositions are always tonal and make excellent use of scales, arpeggios, and wide intervals contrived in various keys to get the maximum use of the F attachment.

After 1954, Ostrander started a second book for the bass trombone and tenor trombone with F attachment in order to make something available at a lower cost and something not as difficult for tenor trombonists. The C. G. Conn Company had produced a trombone with F attachment called the 88H model, which was becoming increasingly

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid.

popular.²⁸ It in turn created the need for a book teaching the use of the valve. Ostrander completed the book in 1956, giving it the title The F Attachment and Bass Trombone. It was published by Charles Colin, a popular publisher of music for brass instruments in New York City.²⁹ Ostrander believed that Colin agreed to publish it because he recognized it as a potentially economically profitable book. Ostrander recalls that Emory Remington, trombone instructor at the Eastman School of Music, ordered several copies as soon as it was available and asked him to autograph them for his students.³⁰ The F Attachment and Bass Trombone is, according to Ostrander, his most popular book, probably because it is designed more for the tenor trombone with F attachment which more trombonists play than the bass trombone.

At the beginning of the book is a chart using a slide for illustrative purposes for showing the positions using the valve, again a reproduction of Ostrander's drawings. Following this are two pages of text explaining how the valve is used and how the book should be used. Then the

²⁸Donald Knaub, Trombone Teaching Techniques (Fairport, NY: Rochester Music Publishers, Inc., 1964), 10.

²⁹Ostrander, interview by the writer.

³⁰Ibid.

book is divided in two sections, the first part consisting of graduated exercises and etudes for using the valve and the last part consisting of orchestral excerpts. The exercises for developing the use of the thumb on the valve and intonation of valve notes are generally the same as in the Method for Bass Trombone and F Attachment for Tenor Trombone, while the etudes are very short and somewhat easier in comparison.

The etudes in The F Attachment and Bass Trombone were derived from a few orchestral excerpts and from collections of songs by Berlioz and Grieg, along with Ostrander's own original ideas.³¹ An example of his use of an orchestral excerpt is in the forty-fifth etude, in which he reversed and inverted a passage of the bass trombone part from Tchaikovsky's ballet, Sleeping Beauty.³² Later on the same passage appears in the orchestral excerpt section as Tchaikovsky wrote it³³ (see figures 12 and 13).

Some of the songs used were presented in their original format except that the keys were changed and pitches were lowered to fit within the bass trombone's low register.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid.

³³Allen Ostrander, The F Attachment and Bass Trombone, 38.

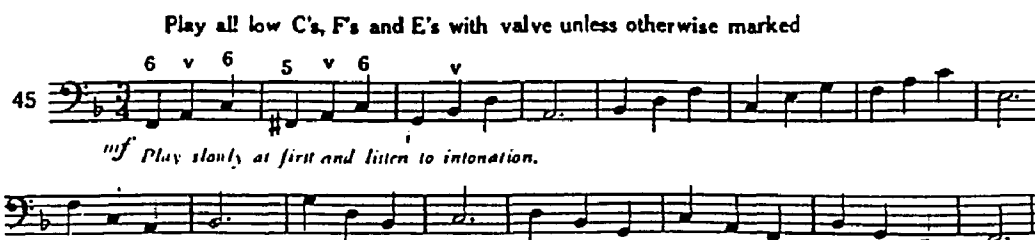


Figure 12. Reprinted, by permission, from Ostrander, The F Attachment and Bass Trombone, page 21, no. 45, copyright 1956 by New Sounds in Music, Charles Colin Publications, 315 West 53 St., New York, NY 10019.



Figure 13. Excerpt of the bass trombone part from Tchaikovsky's Sleeping Beauty. Reprinted, by permission, from The F Attachment and Bass Trombone, page 38, copyright 1956 by New Sounds in Music, Charles Colin Publications, 315 West 53 St., New York, NY 10019.

One such example is the fortieth etude, a song by Berlioz, also the longest piece in the book.³⁴ Ostrander does not recall what pieces were taken from the song literature of Grieg or Berlioz, nor all the orchestral excerpts used. For his own practice material, he often purchased song collections and thus became familiar with a fairly large number of songs that were even unfamiliar to some vocalists.³⁵

The original etudes were prepared the same way as in his earlier method by presenting the different uses of the valve and problems of intonation between regular positions and those using the valve. Once all the manuscript for the book was finished, Ostrander spread all the pages on the floor in a room of the house. He examined each page to see what might be missing when using the valve by transposing in his mind each piece in different keys and making sure that he presented the maximum use of the valve. Having decided the keys, he next checked to see if there were sufficient material to publish and to put the pages in their proper order as well as to put in valve markings

³⁴Ostrander, interview by the writer.

³⁵Ibid.

and slide positions. Once this was finished, he presented it to Charles Colin who then published the work.³⁶

During the summers of 1956-60 while teaching at the New England Music Camp, Ostrander discovered that most of the students did not have any type of warm-up plan for getting ready to play; they simply "blasted away."³⁷ He began writing down the types of things he used in his own warm-up such as long tones, lip slurs, rapid tonguing, and slide or valve motion exercises. For Ostrander, the warm-up was preparation for playing and should include exercises covering the fundamentals of playing the trombone. The warm up needed to be brief as well, because as an orchestral player, he did not have time to spend an hour to warm-up and then play a rehearsal. A long warm-up might cause his lip to tire, affecting his performance.³⁸

He experimented with various exercises for different students, trying to match them with their particular needs and whether they played tenor or bass trombone, baritone, four valve euphonium, or tuba, since he was teaching all

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

of these instruments.³⁹ Eventually, the pages of manuscript were put in order and printed for distribution and entitling the work Quick Warm-Ups with instructions for selecting which exercises to use.⁴⁰ Upon returning to New York City after the camp was over in the summer of 1959, Ostrander showed the material to Charles Colin, who in turn published the material that same year with a new title, Twenty Minute Warm-Up. This particular title was chosen over the other one because Ostrander and Colin wanted to give the user a more concrete time frame for a warm-up since some might use the entire book and take too much time, while others might spend too brief a time. Ostrander figured that his own warm up time was approximately twenty minutes and felt that that was sufficient.⁴¹ Along with the new title, a preface was added, called "Opinions of Allen Ostrander." This section provided valuable insight on his views of breath control, articulation and release of notes, and note valuation.⁴²

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Mead, interview by the writer.

⁴¹Ostrander, interview by the writer.

⁴²Allen Ostrander, Twenty Minute Warm-Up (New York: Charles Colin, 1959), inside front cover - 1.

Two interesting aspects of the book are the sections for lip slurs, and slide and valve motion exercise. The lip slurs are done by starting on the lower note and moving to the upper in rapid succession. Ostrander says that most brass players slur down to the lower note because that is generally considered easier. He wrote his in the lower to upper slurs because he always found this easier than the other way. He practiced slurring down, never getting them to the fluency he wanted, but he did write them in his book.⁴³

The slide and valve motion exercises were written more for baritone and four valve euphonium players than for trombonists because Ostrander had noticed that the camp students did not know the half and whole step valve combinations very well. The trombonists know that moving from one position to another represented a half step, but when baritone or euphonium players pressed the second valve, they did not know what to do to go to a half or whole step quickly. Ostrander developed these slide and valve motion exercises from those he used to prepare for playing the baritone or euphonium in the orchestra.⁴⁴

⁴³Ostrander, interview by the writer.

⁴⁴Ibid.

The bass trombonist and tubist will not find many low notes in the warm-ups, although the tubist is told to play the exercises an octave lower.⁴⁵ Some of the notes were edited with valve markings for bass trombone, but Ostrander suggests that a bass trombonist might also play some of the exercises an octave lower.⁴⁶

During the late-1950's to mid-1960's, Ostrander worked on several projects compiling information that led to his fourth bass trombone book, Shifting Meter Studies, published in 1965 by Robert King Music Company.⁴⁷ At first, he was not necessarily planning to write a set of studies, but the idea grew as he compiled information that seemed to demonstrate the need for a book dealing with the problems of unusual meters and rhythms as well as the uses of the double valve bass trombone.

Ostrander worked on one project in which, for several years, he examined several trombone etudes and methods for different types of unusual time signatures. He categorized them according to the title of the book, indicating what time signatures were used and what pages they were on, and wrote the information on loose leaf paper. Unusual time

⁴⁵Ostrander, Twenty Minute Warm-up, 1.

⁴⁶Ostrander, interview by the writer.

⁴⁷Ibid.

signatures included anything except simple and compound time signatures.⁴⁸ After he started playing the double valve bass trombone, he realized that other bass trombonists would also purchase a double valve instrument and not know how to use it. Thus, he began searching through bass trombone parts of orchestra music, etudes, methods, and tuba and cello music for the notes C and B below the staff to see not only how often these notes occurred, but how they were approached and left in the music. At the same time, he studied the rhythmic patterns of the music he was playing with the New York Philharmonic, because Bernstein was programming compositions of modern composers more frequently than previous conductors, and it became necessary to practice the more intricate rhythms.⁴⁹ Ostrander decided to compose the Shifting Meter Studies because he saw that composers were writing lower notes for the bass trombone, particularly the low C and B, and they were making the rhythms and time signatures more difficult.

Since he already had a good idea how many unusual time signatures were being used and how often low C and B were being used, he began writing out the bass trombone

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid.

parts containing difficult rhythmic passages. the length of these excerpts was anywhere from two or three measures to three or four lines of music. Next, he wrote out these rhythm patterns on one note and began experimenting with how these rhythmic figures could be altered and combined to fit an odd meter. He also realized the need for the bass trombonist to develop a strong pedal range and studied bass trombone parts of orchestral music to see how low they went and how these notes were approached and left.⁵⁰

As a result of his study, Ostrander eventually composed the nineteen etudes in Shifting Meter Studies. Most of the etudes, all original music, are in sharp keys to make frequent use of low B.⁵¹ The book is edited for the so-called stacked dependent F and E double valve bass trombone, meaning that the second valve and first valve must be depressed simultaneously for the E valve tubing to be used. The in-line double valve bass trombone with its valves operating independently of each other was not yet being manufactured. Ostrander chose not to use symbols to indicate when both valves were to be used, but instead prefaced the book with text explaining how to use the

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid.

positions when using the valves and explaining why the second valve is better tuned to a flat E rather than E. The etudes were annotated for the double valve bass trombone tuned to F and flat E.⁵² Of all of his books, Shifting Meter Studies appears to be the most popular with bass trombonists, according to Ostrander, because it filled a genuine need for etudes using complex rhythms and unusual meters in preparation not only for orchestral music, but also for solos. Ostrander chose Robert King Music Company as the publisher because of its fine reputation for fairness to the composer.⁵³

Melodious Etudes for Trombone, a three-volume set of vocalises by Marco Bordogni and arranged by Joannes Rochut (a trombonist with the Boston Symphony Orchestra from 1925 to 1930) was very popular with trombonists at this time.⁵⁴ In fact, Ostrander had purchased the set the year it was available in 1928 and later used it while learning the bass trombone. Ostrander already knew that the etudes were playable on the bass trombone an octave lower than written, but thought that there was a need for

⁵²Allen Ostrander, Shifting Meter Studies (North Eaton, MA: Robert King Music Co., 1965), 3.

³³Ostrander, interview by the writer.

³⁴Glenn P. Smith, "Errata for Bordogni-Rochut's Melodious Etude for Trombone, Book I," International Trombone Association Journal 5 (January 1977): 5.

a bass trombone edition because of the playing difference, particularly in phrasing, from the tenor trombone.

Because of the large amount of air needed for producing the lower notes on the bass trombone, Ostrander felt that Rochut's phrase markings were too long and that editing for the valve was needed.

To solve the problem, Ostrander chose certain etudes from Rochut's published set and shortened the phrases, added valve editing, and transposed them so that all key signatures were used and they were in a more practical range for the bass trombone. He compiled them according to difficulty and sent them to the editorial board of Carl Fischer assuming that there were no copyright problems, since the company held copyright on Rochut's "Melodious Etudes." At first the editorial board accepted Ostrander's work; however, later Ostrander received a telephone call from a gentleman whom he assumed was on the board, asking him if he were able to prove that his arrangements were taken from public domain material. Unable to give proof, Ostrander destroyed all of the etudes and started over completely. Ostrander learned that if he changed material from public domain, the changes had to be different from Rochut's changes. He worked more carefully the second time and finally produced a set of etudes half the length of his original ones and called the book Melodious Etudes for Bass

Trombone. This was published in 1970 by Carl Fischer. Ostrander recalls that after this incident over public domain material, he destroyed hundreds of pages of the material for bass trombone which he had considered publishing because he wanted to avoid any problems with copyright laws.⁵⁵

When the New York Philharmonic made its international tours during summer months, Ostrander often visited music shops in various cities searching for bass trombone music or for any music for other instruments which could be adaptable for bass trombone. On one such visit, he purchased from Musica Rara in London, England, a two-volume set of bass trombone studies by Boris Grigoriev, published in Russia. After examining and playing through the etudes, Ostrander thought that they should be published in the United States and asked International Music Company in New York City if they would publish them. He talked to them because he had had several solo and etude arrangements for tenor trombone published by them. Often when he took them something to be published, they gave him music to edit because music with his name as editor sold well.⁵⁶

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Ibid.

International Music did not want to publish the entire two volumes (one used all major keys and the other minor keys), because the costs for printing were too great. Ostrander then decided to choose what he thought were the best ones covering keys up to six flats and five sharps, and added some editing for using the F valve. In 1970, International agreed to publish his edition entitled 24 Studies for Bass Trombone or Trombone with F Attachment.⁵⁷

Before Ostrander retired from the New York Philharmonic, he worked on another set of studies using the music of his former teacher, Ernest Williams. During his lifetime, Williams had written a large number of solos, etudes, and methods for the trumpet,⁵⁸ and when he died, Charles Colin, also a former pupil,⁵⁹ bought Williams's catalog of music from the Williams estate.⁶⁰ Ostrander used one of Williams's books, Method for Transposition, for bass trombone practice because many of the etudes were written very low for different-pitched trumpets. By reading the treble clef as bass clef, altering the

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Bridges.

⁵⁹Charles Colin, The Brass Player (New York: Charles Colin, 1972), 3.

⁶⁰Ostrander, interview by the writer.

key signature and accidentals, he had practice material for the extreme pedal range of the bass trombone. Ostrander decided to have some of these published in honor of Ernest Williams because he saw a need for this type of practice material. As he prepared the etudes for editing, he had a pupil, Lionel Brookins, bass trombonist of the United States Military Academy Band, practice them so that he was able to check his editorial work. He then dedicated the book, Double-Valve Bass Trombone Low Tone Studies, to Brookins. "Low Tone Studies," published by Charles Colin who owned the Williams catalogue, was available for sale in 1975 just before Ostrander retired.⁶¹

Ostrander's most recent book, Basic Techniques for the Double Valve Bass Trombone, was published in 1988 by Robert King Music Company and, according to Ostrander, is the last book he will write. Ostrander, as he had with his first published work, once again dedicated the method to Walter Lillibach, the only bass trombone teacher he had had. Ostrander used King as publisher because he had assisted in preparing the text for the method.⁶² King, a former euphonium player, had studied with Aaron Harris,

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid.

also one of Ostrander's earliest trombone teachers, but the two had never met until a recent music convention after "Basic Techniques" was published.⁶³

With the same foresight that he had had throughout his career regarding the needs of bass trombonists, Ostrander decided that a method for the in-line double valve bass trombone was needed since more bass trombonists were playing this instrument. The in-line independent double valve bass trombone provided more uses of the valves because, unlike the stacked dependent instrument, the valves worked independently of each other as well as together. The tuning possibilities with the dependent system offered F, E, E flat or, with the extended tuning slide for second valve, D, whereas the in-line system offered the same plus G or G flat with the second valve used alone.⁶⁴ Ostrander, who had never played an in-line model, examined method books which others had written and also observed bass trombonists using them. His conclusion was that the methods were confusing: they did not offer enough explanation about how the various tunings affected

⁶³Robert King, North Easton, MA, letter to the writer, Pensacola, FL, 17 July 1990.

⁶⁴Allen Ostrander, Basic Techniques for the Double Valve Bass Trombone (North Easton, MA; Robert King Music Co., 1988), 3-4.

the slide positions nor did they offer sufficient number of basic exercises for the bass trombonist to develop good slide technique using the valves. As a result, the players were not sure how to use the second valve to the best advantage, particularly since two fingers were needed for the valves.⁶⁵

Ostrander does not recall exactly when he started writing the method, but he remembers that it took a few years. He believes that the most important part is the six pages of text at the beginning outlining the history of the bass trombone, intonation problems, use of the valves, and slide position charts for the various valve tunings.⁶⁶ Ostrander always considers it important for the user of his books to read carefully the text, and in this case, he even says so in a paragraph typed in upper case letters.

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT BASS TROMBONE PLAYERS USING THIS BOOK UNDERSTAND THAT THE MEAT OF THE MATTER IS IN THE TEXT. THE MUSIC THAT FOLLOWS IS MERELY CONCERNED WITH THE APPLICATION OF THE IDEAS SET FORTH IN THE TEXT. READ AND REREAD ALL INSTRUCTIONS AND BE SURE THAT THEY ARE UNDERSTOOD.⁶⁷

⁶⁵Ostrander, interview by the writer.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ostrander, Basic Techniques for the Double Bass Trombone, 6.

What follows are music exercises, divided according to the type of valve tuning used, called "Application Studies," using arpeggios and scale patterns in quarter and half more value with several markings for the valves.⁶⁸ Some value coordination exercises using triads in sixteenth notes are scattered throughout the book. The music increases in difficulty as the book progresses, concluding with some etudes similar to those found in Shifting Meter Studies. While his first method made use of a great deal of borrowed material, "Basic Techniques" contains mainly original music in which Ostrander purposely wrote passages to be what he calls "loaded," to show how to use the valves much in the manner as he wrote in his first method book.⁶⁹ Toward the end of the book, he includes a few excerpts of bass arias from Handel's Messiah and Saul written down an octave and says that since the text is dramatic and should be sung with a full tone, the bass trombonist should perform it in the same manner as a singer would.⁷⁰

This was Ostrander's most difficult book to write because he wanted the text to be easily understood and

⁶⁸Ibid., 7.

⁶⁹Ostrander, interview by the writer.

⁷⁰Ostrander, Basic Techniques for the Double Valve Bass Trombone, 25.

the music to be properly edited for using the various tunings. He wrote to Robert King, sending him copies of the draft and asked him to read it, making sure he understood every sentence. If King did not understand something, then he figured that nobody else could either and edited the text, sending it back to Ostrander who checked it for accuracy. Because of the assistance Ostrander received from King, he feels that King's name should be included as an editor since he clarified many of his sentences.⁷¹

Ostrander's bass trombone books were written to fulfill the needs of bass trombonists, giving practical material to improve playing techniques. If the student carefully reads the text of each book and properly follows the instructions, any bass trombonist using the book, particularly his methods, will in essence have Ostrander as a teacher.

The influence and popularity of Ostrander's books, particularly the first, Method for Bass Trombone and F Attachment for Tenor Trombone, is best shown by what other trombonists say. Edward Kleinhammer, former bass trombonist of the Chicago Symphony, said it was ". . . the most

⁷¹Ostrander, interview by the writer.

comprehensive and highly recommended method for bass trombone."⁷² Alan Raph, a New York City studio bass trombonist, thanks Ostrander, among others, for his contributions to the double valve bass trombone in the preface to his own method, The Double Valve Bass Trombone.⁷³ He goes on to suggest that bass trombonists need to learn how to use the F attachment and he recommends Ostrander's method as ". . . the most authoritative of its type."⁷⁴ Edwin Anderson, former student of Ostrander who from 1964 to 1985 was bass trombonist of the Cleveland Orchestra and is currently bass trombone instructor at Indiana University, uses all of Ostrander's bass trombone books with his students, including Basic Techniques for the Double Valve Bass Trombone.⁷⁵ Terry Cravens, trombone instructor at the University of Southern California and also a former pupil of Ostrander, states that he uses many of the books with his bass trombone students because of the ". . . exacting nature of his

⁷²Kleinhammer, 107.

⁷³Alan Raph, The Double Valve Bass Trombone (New York: Carl Fischer, Inc., 1969), 3.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Edwin Anderson, Bloomington, IN, letter to the writer, Pensacola, FL, 2 July 1990.

approach."⁷⁶ Evidently, Ostrander's books remain popular as teaching tools, particularly by his former students who now are teachers.

Besides the methods and etudes which Ostrander composed and arranged, he also wrote numerous solos and trombone ensemble arrangements for tenor and bass trombone, including two original compositions for solo bass trombone. The solos discussed are limited to those for the bass trombone.

Ostrander arranged or edited three solos for bass trombone, the earliest being in 1935 while he was with the National Symphony.⁷⁷ He often spent Sunday afternoons in the Library of Congress searching the card catalog for any music that might interest him. He was not able to search the library stacks himself and found it difficult to get any help from the library assistants because they did not seem to know anything about music nor about translating foreign titles when they searched for music for him. He knew the man in charge of the music department in the library because he was the program annotator for the symphony and he asked him for permission

⁷⁶Terry S. Cravens, La Canada, CA, letter to the writer, Pensacola, FL, 3 August 1990.

⁷⁷Ostrander, interview by the writer.

to search the stacks himself. He remembers that the stacks were quite dirty and the music was not in its proper order.⁷⁸

Ostrander recalls searching for some manuscript of a piece listed in the catalog as Praeludium, Chorale, Variations and Fugue for bass trombone and organ by Johann Immanuel Muller. He eventually found it and began the arduous task of copying it out by hand in the library, since he was not allowed to take it out and copy machines were not available. He found that the organ part was on two staves, but there were notes for both hands and pedals, while the bass trombone part was on separate paper and it was not cued above the accompaniment. When he wrote out his copy, he made a three stave organ part, so that it was easier to read. This took a long time because he had to make sure he put the notes on the correct staff. In the summer of 1937, he performed the piece at West Virginia Wesleyan College⁷⁹ where he visited C. L. Kingsbury, chairman of its music department and a friend from his student days at Ithaca Conservatory.⁸⁰

⁷⁸Allen Ostrander, Ithaca, NY, letter to the writer, Pensacola, FL, 26 October 1982.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Ostrander, interview by the writer.

Before the composition was published in 1959 by Edition Musicus in Connecticut, Ostrander rewrote the first variation to reduce the organ part to two lines to be playable on the piano. Since the bass trombone did not play the first variation and the accompaniment was condensed to two lines, he took a portion of the chorale melody out of the organ part and made it a trombone part, so that all of the notes from the manuscript were still played.⁸¹

The second variation was changed somewhat because Ostrander thought that the bass trombone part was too dull. The original part played only fragments of the chorale melody similar to what he rewrote in the first variation. For the second variation, he combined all the notes from the solo part with the accompaniment to see what was there and to understand the variation's difference from the others. Seeing that there were several arpeggiated passages in the accompaniment, he left the solo part as it was and moved some of the arpeggio passages to the section where the bass trombone part rested, leaving the accompaniment with chords at the location where the extractions took place. The chorale melody and arpeggio phrases alternate between the solo

⁸¹Ostrander, interview by the writer.

and accompaniment, with all the notes from the original manuscript still played. Throughout the composition, the bass trombone never plays the complete chorale melody.⁸²

Ostrander also adapted the solo arrangement by either writing some of the notes an octave higher or using notes from the chords to put the part in a playing range for trombonists not using an F attachment or who had difficulty playing in the lower register. All of the low notes in the work are from the original solo part except for the last three of variation three, in which a double valve bass trombone is needed to play the low C flat to the two pedal B flats.⁸³

Ostrander believes that the original piece was written around 1839 because that was the date on the original manuscript, although the manuscript itself may have been a copy. The chorale title was also written on the manuscript, "Mir Nacht, Spricht Christus, Unser Held," but did not name its composer.⁸⁴

Ostrander chose Edition Musicus as publisher because he already had several tenor trombone solos published by

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Ibid.

them and they were willing to publish more of his works. According to Ostrander, it was not difficult to get music published in the late fifties and early sixties because he was a member of the New York Philharmonic, an extremely popular orchestra. Although Ostrander used several publishers, Edition Musicus was his primary publishing company for his solos. Though he receives royalties⁸⁵ for Praeludium, Chorale, Variations, and Fugue, it is unfortunate that his name is omitted from the music as the editor of this important nineteenth century bass trombone solo.

Another solo which Ostrander edited for bass trombone was a piece originally written for tuba, Concerto in One Movement by A. Lebedev, also published by Edition Musicus in 1960. He purchased from a music store a copy of the Russian edition for tuba several years before the United States publication. After playing it and deciding that he liked it, he made a few changes in the music to fit the bass trombone. He felt that the notes were fine as they were for bass trombone, so he simply added some style markings, breath marks, and suggestions for using the valve.⁸⁶ He did change one note, a low C flat to a pedal

⁸⁵Ostrander, interview by the writer.

⁸⁶Ibid.

A flat in the twentieth measure.⁸⁷ Also, the accompaniment was changed in that particular measure because it played in octaves with the solo. A low B was left in the last measure because Ostrander thought the bass trombonist had time to pull the valve tuning slide so it could be played in tune.⁸⁸

At the time the concerto was published, Ostrander understood that Lebedev was a retired tubist from the Bolshoi Opera in Moscow and presumes that he is, by now, deceased. Ostrander first performed his edition at the New England Music Camp sometime in the late fifties.⁸⁹

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the trombone section consisting of Pulis, Van Haney, and Ostrander practiced often together on trios arranged by Ostrander. On occasion, they worked on four-part chorales and included the tubist, William Bell. Many of these ensemble arrangements were eventually published. One such arrangement was a set of four of J. S. Bach's two-part inventions which Bell and Ostrander used together as practice material.⁹⁰

⁸⁷Allen Ostrander, Ithaca, NY, letter to the writer, Pensacola, FL, 13 January 1985.

⁸⁸Ostrander, interview by the writer.

⁸⁹Ostrander, letter, 13 January 1985.

⁹⁰Ostrander, interview by the writer.

Ostrander recalls that Bell played the top line of the treble clef in the piano part as if it was in bass clef, while he wrote out his own part transposing it a fifth to fit what Bell 'played (he did this with all the inventions). After he retired, he had the time to write out both parts, and in writing what Bell played, he guessed where it was necessary to change octaves when the part went too high. He showed the arrangements to Kendor Publishing Company in upstate New York and, after deciding which ones might be cumbersome on CC tuba, Kendor published numbers one, three, twelve, and fifteen in 1976. They are playable in any combination of two bass trombones, two tubas, or bass trombone and tuba.⁹¹

The only bass trombone solo arranged by Ostrander since retirement is The Lion from the cantata, In the African Jungle, by Handel. Ostrander had received a set of Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians as a retirement gift and had made it a habit to read some sections about Handel. In his reading, he kept coming across the name Boschi, and after doing some research, learned that he was a bass singer with various opera companies and had an extremely wide vocal range. Handel had written two

⁹¹Ibid.

arias to display Boschi's range and Ostrander located them in the complete works of Handel at the Ithaca College Library and chose The Lion to arrange for bass trombone. First, he copied the music, which gave only the solo line and the figured bass; then he made an accompaniment in the style of Handel. He then edited the solo line adding slurs, dynamics, and phrase markings based on the text which was in Italian. After translating the text, Ostrander learned the aria was about a lion in the jungle, so he gave it the title, The Lion. He talked to Kendor again about publishing it. Kendor wanted the key changed from the original f sharp minor to f minor because it was difficult to sell music in sharp keys. Ostrander agreed to this and it was published in 1979.⁹² It since has gone out of print as a bass trombone solo, but has been adapted for the bass clarinet for use as a contest piece because of the need for bass clarinet solos.⁹³ The writer owns a copy of the bass trombone solo and has performed it on recital, finding it to be a deceptively difficult work. There are many wide leaps of more than an octave that are slurred, including one leap of almost two octaves, making

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³Nadine Gardner, Promotion Director, Kendor Music, Inc., Delevan, NY, letter to the writer, Pensacola, FL, 21 August 1990.

it a challenge to play cleanly and keep proper interpretation. It is fascinating to think that someone actually had sung this aria.

Ostrander composed only two original bass trombone solos, both published by Edition Musicus in 1960.⁹⁴ Concert Piece in Fugal Style was written between the winters of 1958-59 and was first performed at the New England Music Camp in the summer of 1959. He based the form on a Bach fugue with the counterpoint occurring between the solo line and the accompaniment. The principal theme was adapted from an early French composition that he no longer owns. It is tonally and rhythmically very conservative with many scale and arpeggio passages, and at the end it has some rapidly moving lip slurs which Ostrander wrote to demonstrate his own talent in playing them. He wrote an optional part consisting of articulated sixteenth note passages for persons unable to do the lip slurs, and he wrote optional notes an octave higher for the trombones without an F attachment.⁹⁵ Concert Piece

⁹⁴Ostrander, interview by the writer.

⁹⁵Ostrander, letter, 13 January 1985.

in Fugal Style is currently in print and has been adapted by the publisher for other instruments.⁹⁶

Ostrander's only other original published composition is an extended work entitled Sonata in g minor for unaccompanied bass trombone, although an optional piano accompaniment at one time was available for rental. "Sonata" was written by Ostrander for his own use to demonstrate the technical capabilities of the bass trombone and the intricacies of the F attachment. He did include two low Bs, one in the first movement and the other in the second, necessitating the use of a double valve bass trombone, but he also wrote optional notes to play, since most bass trombonists at the time it was published used a single valve instrument.⁹⁷

The sonata was influenced by Bach's unaccompanied suites for the cello which were popular with trombonists at that time and remain so. It is in three movements with each given a tempo marking; the first is allegro moderato, the second andante later to agitato returning to tempo primo, and the third allegro vivace. The first movement is heavily edited for use of the valve, and it is the most

⁹⁶Ostrander, interview by the writer.

⁹⁷Ostrander, interview by the writer.

difficult to play. There are several passages that are quite awkward to play, almost to the point of being unmusical, but these were written to make use of the possible "quirks" of the valve. The first movement is reminiscent of the preludes from Bach's cello suites, with its use of many arpeggios and scales and use of thematic material.⁹⁸

When Ostrander wrote the second movement he wanted it to be in a free, rubato style, with changing meters, tempos, tenuto markings, and dynamics. It begins in $\frac{5}{4}$ time at a moderately slow tempo which creates the free, relaxed style Ostrander desired. The middle of the second movement is marked agitato and, according to Ostrander, needs to be played with light, crisp articulation except for the slurs. There are frequent meter changes and retardandos to give a "noodling" effect as might be heard from a cello.⁹⁹ The movement then ends as it begins, returning to the slower tempo in $\frac{5}{4}$.

According to Ostrander, the published copy of the sonata has a few misprints in the second movement where sharps were used in place of natural signs. In measure

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Ibid.

twenty, the last sixteenth of beat one and measure twenty-three, the second eighth note of beat one should have natural signs. Also, in measure twenty-eight, the quarter note of beat four and measure thirty-five, the first eighth note of beat three need natural signs instead of sharps.¹⁰⁰

The final movement is in triple meter and is similar to the gigue used by Bach in the cello suites. It makes frequent use of tonic and dominant arpeggios, along with several scale passages based on g minor.

Sonata in g minor is a good solo to use as an introduction to Bach's cello suites because it is so similar to them, but is somewhat easier to play. The writing is idiomatic for the bass trombone, yet challenging by how Ostrander carefully makes use of the valve which is also needed in the cello suites.

The piano accompaniment was written to add interest to the solo line for those desiring an accompaniment. Ostrander preferred the solo unaccompanied, but the publisher thought that the solo might sell better if an accompaniment were available, since at that time few people performed unaccompanied solos. Edition Musicus

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

agreed to the rental piano accompaniment; thus, Ostrander composed a fairly simple one and also edited the solo by bracketing sections to omit when the accompaniment was used. The sonata and accompaniment have been permanently out of print for several years, but Ostrander owns copies of both.¹⁰¹

Ostrander never considered himself to be a composer, but preferred to think that he was a decomposer because he borrowed other music to adapt for his own purposes. Almost all of his bass trombone material, particularly the methods, etudes, and original solos, were written as teaching tools for learning to use the valves of the bass trombone in order to make playing easier. Most of his composing, based on his own experience, was done to provide models of what the bass trombonist encountered when playing orchestra music.¹⁰² Van Haney recalls that Ostrander always took manuscript paper with him on tours to compose his method books. He once asked him where he got his ideas, to which Ostrander replied that one must know where to borrow, and then invert or write it backward and disguise the source with some original ideas.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³Van Haney, letter.

Ostrander was always involved with editing solos for trombone which were originally composed for other instruments. Several were vocal works that had been used with students at the New England Music Camp. Ostrander, concerned that young students develop good tone quality and play musically, felt that song literature accomplished this more than technically difficult etudes for both bass or tenor trombone players.¹⁰⁴

There remains one significant collection of sacred arias, of which very few were published, that Ostrander arranged for himself to play in church. Sometime in 1968, he began attending Bethany United Methodist Church near his home in New Jersey. The minister of the church, Reverend Hai-Jong Kim, a Korean, asked Ostrander to play trombone solos during the church services; on these occasions, he used some material which he already had published.¹⁰⁵

In 1971, Kim began preaching a series of Sunday morning sermons which went through the entire Bible chronologically, and he asked Ostrander to play arias appropriate for each sermon topic through the course of the year. For the month of January, Ostrander played

¹⁰⁴Ostrander, interview by the writer.

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

solos which he had already edited or arranged for himself that did not conform with the topics, because he had not received information about them in time to prepare any appropriate music. He did receive the topics for February and began an immediate, massive research project for appropriate music that encompassed the entire year.¹⁰⁶

First, Ostrander began reading the Scofield Reference Bible in the King James Version, because it was a popular reference edition and he thought that the annotations and introductory remarks given before the actual text were probably the most accurate. Also, he used Charles Pfeiffer's An Outline of Old Testament History, published by Moody Press, to make sure that he was following Kim's sermons chronologically. Also, he wanted to identify the most significant personalities, particularly the kings mentioned in the Bible.¹⁰⁷ He wrote out his own chronological outlines, noting dates and putting the books of the Bible in what he thought was the proper order. He also jotted down the book's major historical events and personalities. At the same time, he researched in the music library of the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, looking for oratorios, operas, and other sacred music for

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

areas associated with these events and personalities. He wrote down the title of the oratorio and its composer, along with the titles of each aria and its voicing. He had no trouble gaining permission to search the stacks since New York Philharmonic musicians were allowed access to the library.¹⁰⁸

When Ostrander arranged each aria selected for the Sunday morning service, he was careful to observe the text of each one, so that the phrasing emphasized what was being sung. For assistance with German and Latin texts, Ostrander contacted an uncle, Stuart Hinman, a retired Lutheran minister and religion professor at Wagner College in New York City, but living in Pine Beach, New Jersey, at the time.¹⁰⁹ Hinman suggested that Ostrander also study the Gospels together with the Old Testament lessons found in the Lutheran church hymnal, Service Book and Hymnal, to see their relationship.¹¹⁰ Ostrander also received some translation assistance from Hinman with the Biblical Greek text when he was comparing the aria text with the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

¹¹⁰Rev. Stuart Hinman, Pine Beach, NJ, letter to Allen Ostrander, Fort Lee, NJ, 12 March 1971.

Testament. He wanted the text to be as accurate as possible because he always recited it before playing the aria, so that the congregation would know what it was. On rare instances, he played arias that did not correspond exactly with the sermon, but conveyed the spiritual meaning of it.¹¹¹

When Ostrander prepared the actual arrangements, he also penciled in the text with the notes, so that he was able to put in his phrase markings and knew where to add dynamics for textual emphasis. Where there were rests longer than a quarter, he replaced those with either quarter or eighth rests sometimes altering the time signature (see figure 14). He did this because the church pianist was unable to play the accompaniments to his liking, and he thought it better to do without them rather than have the individual play them incorrectly.¹¹²

Ostrander kept careful records of his performances, writing down the date he performed each aria, the source, and the book of the Bible with which it was associated for each Sunday he played in 1971. He also kept similar records for the following years through 1974. In all, there were nearly a hundred arias which he arranged for himself to

¹¹¹Ostrander, interview by the writer.

¹¹²Ibid.

play, and only a very few have been published. According to his records, well-kept in a three-ring notebook with all his Bible outlines, list of arias, and the arias themselves, he missed only five church services—all of the month of July for a vacation and one unaccountable absence on September 19, 1971.¹¹³ He continued playing at Bethany United Methodist Church on an irregular basis up to his retirement in 1975.¹¹⁴ His final performance at the church, now pastored by William M. Secker, was August 17, 1975,¹¹⁵ also his last Sunday before leaving for Ithaca,¹¹⁶ at which time he played "If With All Your Hearts" from Mendelssohn's Elijah.¹¹⁷ This was a service to honor Ostrander for his contributions to the church and after that service, a reception was given for him.¹¹⁸

Looking back over the years when he was playing solos in church, particularly in 1971, Ostrander is amazed at how

¹¹³Allen Ostrander, "Notes and Arrangements of Music Performed at Bethany United Methodist Church 1968-74," notebook owned by Allen Ostrander, Ithaca, NY, no page number.

¹¹⁴Ostrander, interview by the writer.

¹¹⁵"Bethany United Methodist Church Bulletin," Fort Lee, NJ, 17 August 1975.

¹¹⁶Ostrander, interview by the writer.

¹¹⁷Ostrander, "Notes and Arrangements of Music Performed at Bethany United Methodist Church," no page number.

¹¹⁸"Bethany United Methodist Church Bulletin."

he accomplished the work he did in Bible and music research, as well as arranging the arias and memorizing them for performance. Despite the busy schedule of the New York Philharmonic, he found time to do the work because he enjoyed it and respected the minister, Kim, for his pastoral work.¹¹⁹ One of the arias, Thunder, Lightning, and Whistling Wind, was dedicated to Reverend Kim when it was published in 1975.¹²⁰

The significance and usefulness of this large collection of arias, as well as the research done by Ostrander, might benefit the church musician, as well as the trombonist. For those involved with selecting music for church services, particularly those that are liturgical, this collection would enable them to coordinate a solo with the minister's sermon because of the numerous topics covered by the arias.

The tenor or bass trombonist, and any other instrumentalist for that matter, can learn a great deal about proper phrasing by studying the procedure used by Ostrander in his arrangements. Through studying and practicing the phrase markings, dynamics, and the texts, a musician can

¹¹⁹Ostrander, interview by the writer.

¹²⁰George Frederic Handel, Thunder, Lightning, and Whistling Wind, arranged for trombone by Allen Ostrander (Delevan, NY: Kendor Music, Inc., 1975), 1.

better understand and apply the more detailed, sensitive points of stylistic interpretation and develop a high level of musicianship. Arrangements of vocalises provide much-needed study material for developing a "singing" approach to trombone playing, but the use of arias with the text printed in English, or whatever appropriate language for the trombonist, allows him to develop greater sensitivity to the music and communicative skills toward his audience.

The writer encouraged Ostrander to consider compiling some of these arias for a method on phrasing and interpretation suitable for tenor and bass trombone. Ostrander had thought of the idea himself, but was reluctant to do so, because he believed that many student trombonists were not interested in learning proper phrasing and stylistic interpretation, and publishers tend to not publish music if it is not marketable.¹²¹

Because of the foresight Ostrander had regarding the bass trombone and the techniques needed for playing it, he wrote some of the most important methods and etudes with instructions for developing good bass trombone players. His knowledge of composing and arranging, his career as a

¹²¹Ostrander, interview by the writer.

bass trombonist with major symphonies, and the fact that he was primarily self-taught on the bass trombone, gave him the talents needed to write these methods and etudes. Although many of the solos he wrote or arranged are now out of print,¹²² they are significant in themselves, because as he played them he promoted the bass trombone as a solo instrument. This encouraged other composers to write for it as well.

¹²²Ostrander, interview by the writer.

CHAPTER 5

OSTRANDER'S ROLE AS A TEACHER

During his tenure with the New York Philharmonic, Ostrander taught several brass instrumentalists, some for extended periods of time and others for possibly just one brief lesson. Some of these former students now have outstanding careers as performers with major symphonies or as university professors. Through his former students, method books, and articles that he wrote for various journals, one can learn much about his views on certain aspects of trombone playing in particular, as well as brass playing in general.

In working with a student, Ostrander stressed the basic fundamentals of tone quality, intonation, articulation, slurring, and phrasing. He believes that tone quality is the most important of these and needs to receive a great deal of attention, because music is an aural art and a person judges the music quality by what he hears.¹ Arden Norton, retired United States Military Academy Band, recalls Ostrander constantly reminded him that no matter how easy or difficult the music, he must strive to get a

¹Allen Ostrander, "Opinions," Internatinal Trombone Association Journal 3 (January 1975): 4.

proper dark, mellow tone.² The writer remembers in his bass trombone lessons the importance Ostrander placed on rounding off the ends of notes to avoid a harshness in the tone. Ostrander likens the production of the tone of the trombone or any other brass instrument to that of the violin when the violinist carries the bow by supporting the weight off the bow over the strings after the note is played to allow the note to resonate.³ Ostrander uses vocalises to develop the full tone because they provide the best sources (they generally are not technically demanding) and allow the student to concentrate on filling out the tone.⁴ For the student to benefit from vocalises in practice, he must have enough initiative of his own to listen carefully to his tone, or he must have a teacher who insists that he produce the right tone. If the student lacks initiative, vocalises become exercises in which the student merely plays the notes with little regard to tone quality or any other aspects of musicianship.⁵

²Arden Norton, Montgomery, NY, letter to the writer, Pensacola, FL, 3 July 1990.

³Ostrander, Twenty Minute Warm-Ups, inside front cover.

⁴Ostrander, "Opinions," 4.

⁵Ostrander, interview by the writer.

For the tone quality to be full, Ostrander believes that it also must be in tune. Intonation is best learned by playing scales and arpeggios slowly, holding each note for several counts to allow the student to focus on its quality and intonation in relationship to previously played notes.⁶ The warm-up routine which Ostrander used in his own playing is found in his Twenty Minute Warm-Ups; it demonstrates this type of playing by having the student start in the middle of a scale and expanding up and down until two octaves are played or having him play assorted intervals using the notes of a scale.⁷

Most of Ostrander's students responding to letters of inquiry regarding their lessons recall his emphasis on rhythmical control, clear articulation, and balance of dynamics. Terry Cravens, trombone instructor at the University of Southern California and former bass trombonist of the Louisville Orchestra, studied with Ostrander while he played with the United States Military Academy Band. He practiced playing scales, subdividing in his mind to keep all the notes the exact same rhythmical value as he played from one to another. This same procedure was

⁶Ostrander, "Opinions," 4.

⁷Allen Ostrander, "Warming Up," Music Journal 20 (April 1962): 49.

applied to Craven's lessons using the Shifting Meter Studies and the "Method for Bass Trombone."⁸ Edwin Anderson, mentioned in the previous chapter, says that playing the notes their proper length was always stressed in his lessons and that Ostrander always demonstrated by playing them on his bass trombone.⁹ Norton used etudes by Marcel Bitsch in his lessons and was required to play each etude slowly one measure at a time until he had it rhythmically correct.¹⁰

Ostrander's method of articulation was a result of his studies with Gardell Simons who advocated the use of four styles: regular, legato, staccato, and semi-legato. when Ostrander learned to play in these styles, he felt equipped to handle any type of articulation a conductor might ask for in the music. The basic attack, according to Ostrander, is comparable to the elasticity of a tennis ball when it bounces. The elasticity is what is needed for the action of the tongue to create consistency in the attack of the note so that it is always clean without any splitting of the tone. Ostrander suggests that a brass player listen to recordings of concert violinists

⁸Cravens.

⁹Anderson, letter.

¹⁰Norton.

to hear how they neatly start the notes.¹¹ Ostrander was so concerned about the accuracy and consistency of attacks that if a student played several sixteenth notes in a row, he listened carefully enough to be able to tell the student which ones were wrong.¹²

Slurring and phrasing were fundamentals Ostrander spent much time practicing during his performing years and in fact thought that these were his strongest areas.¹³ He says that in his earlier studies on trombone, he was "brought up on lip slurs" because they were useful in limbering up the lip and helping him to relax while playing.¹⁴ Lip slurs were a distinct part of his warm-up routine, and for this reason exercises were included in his book, Twenty Minute Warm-Ups.¹⁵ He recommends slurs that are narrow between two or three notes rather than the type that cover the entire range of the instrument, at least

¹¹Ostrander, Twenty Minute Warm-Ups, inside front cover.

¹²Edwin Anderson, "A Conversation with Edwin Anderson," interview with Bruce Tracy, International Trombone Association Newsletter 7 (September 1981); 24.

¹³Ostrander, interview by the writer.

¹⁴Ostrander, "Warming Up," 49.

¹⁵Ostrander, interview by the writer.

until the student is able to play them rhythmically correct with absolute control and the same dynamic volume between the notes. According to Ostrander, ". . . you should be bossing the horn and not letting the horn boss you."¹⁶

Ostrander's ability to play phrases musically was a result of the instruction he received from Simons when Ostrander used an adaptation of a vocal method. Ostrander's skills in interpretation developed from his constant study of song literature and application of his study to his orchestral playing, making his style musical rather than just mechanical.¹⁷ The writer recalls hearing Ostrander play The Lion during a recital at Ithaca College in 1976—his performance sounded more like a vocalist than a trombonist because of the great control of the phrases.

The writer remembers that Ostrander taught phrasing from a vocalist's point of view by not only playing the phrase for the student, but also singing it, not necessarily with great vocal technique but with the expression of a master musician. Cravens developed absolute control of the phrasing by playing vocalises at one dynamic level with absolutely no rebate. In this way,

¹⁸Ostrander, "Warming Up," 49.

¹⁷Ostrander, interview by the writer.

he was able to make sure that rhythms, tone quality, and smoothness of the phrases were consistent before adding other dynamics and rubato.¹⁸

Ostrander's bass trombone students received instruction in difficult techniques of playing the instrument. Ostrander recognized that as the bass trombone gained popularity among college and professional bass trombonists, high school band directors might switch a tenor trombonist to bass trombone.¹⁹ Band directors need to be aware that a larger mouthpiece is required, larger than even those used with tenor trombone having an F attachment, because a wider diameter of mouthpiece cup helps produce the lower notes. Also the bass trombonist's center of playing—that is, his group of notes where he plays the best—will change to the lower range of the instrument.²⁰ He believes that many trombonists who switch back and forth between tenor and bass try to play the bass trombone like a tenor trombone and as a result do not develop a true bass trombone tone quality,

¹⁸Cravens.

¹⁹Ostrander, interview by the writer.

²⁰Allen Ostrander, "From Tenor to Bass Trombone," Music Journal 20 (February 1962): 75.

because the center of playing does not change to the lower range.²¹ According to Ostrander, one is not a true bass trombonist until he is uncomfortable playing tenor trombone.²²

Ostrander also believes the tendency to switch a weak tenor trombonist to bass trombone is an error which band directors must avoid because of the intricacies of the bass trombone valves. The individual must learn the uses of the valves to the extent that using them is second nature. He believes that enough air must be blown through the valve tubing to match the tone quality and dynamic level when not using the valves. Ostrander suggests that the beginning bass trombonist play second space C with the valve as often as possible when he first switches to the instrument.²³

Thomas Everett, band director at Harvard University and a free-lance bass trombonist in Massachusetts, recalls that as a student at Ithaca College in the early sixties he switched from baritone horn to tenor trombone and then to bass trombone by the end of his sophomore year. He had played third trombone parts in the college band and decided

²¹Ostrander, interview by the writer.

²²Ostrander, "From Tenor to Bass Trombone," 75.

²³Ibid.

he had a feel for the sound of the bass trombone. At the end of his junior year, in the summer of 1965, an hour lesson with Ostrander was arranged for him. Everett brought with him several methods and etudes, including a copy of Ostrander's The F Attachment and Bass Trombone published by Charles Colin. Ostrander had Everett play from this book for what turned out to be a two-hour lesson. (During the first half hour, he had him play only the first little six-measure etude in which only the notes B flat, F, and C with the valve are used.) Everett remembers that Ostrander listened to hear if the dynamic level and tone quality between notes without the valve and those with it were the same. If one C did not match with the B flat or E, Ostrander pointed it out and had him play the etude again until he was consistent all the way through it. Everett considered himself to be a good bass trombonist, but after the lesson he realized that he had much more to learn.²⁴

For particular aspects of bass trombone technique, Anderson, Cravens, and Everett agree that while learning to use the valve was the most important thing they acquired in their lessons, there were other techniques

²⁴Thomas Everett, Arlington, MA, letter to the writer, Pensacola, FL, 6 July 1990.

learned also. Cravens recalls that Ostrander had a concept of sagging the lips somewhat so that the low register notes sounded full.²⁵ By this, Ostrander meant to relax the embouchure somewhat without shifting the mouthpiece, so that the tone quality was consistent at any dynamic level.²⁶ Cravens also liked Ostrander's method for articulation used in "Method for Bass Trombone" (the same method which Simons had used for Ostrander) because of how it has helped him when he played with an orchestra.²⁷

In the low register of the bass trombone, some teachers have their bass trombone students pronounce "Th" for articulating the notes, but Ostrander encourages the use of "T" because "Th" may cause the tongue to touch the upper lip, stopping its vibration long enough to impair the attack of the note.²⁸ Anderson believes that Ostrander had the best method for attacks because a consistent tongue placement throughout the registers of the instrument means consistent attacks.²⁹ The writer utilizes this method and

²⁵Cravens.

²⁶Ostrander, Method for Bass Trombone and F Attachment for Tenor Trombone, 36.

²⁷Cravens.

²⁸Ostrander, "From Tenor to Bass Trombone," 75.

²⁹Anderson, interview by Tracy, 26.

after some practice with it, finds that it produces a cleaner as well as clearer sound in the low register, with fewer missed notes.

Besides better technical skills and improvement in basic fundamentals, Ostrander offered his students a higher standard to use in their own teaching. Anderson credits Ostrander's attention to minute details for helping him to appreciate their importance so that he too listens for them in his own students. He uses Ostrander's books for his students' lesson material and finds that they consider them very demanding when he insists on having the studies played as Ostrander required of him. Even though Ostrander says that he did not particularly enjoy teaching, Anderson considers him as meticulous and conscientious as a teacher as he was when performing in the New York Philharmonic.³⁰

Norton, who has studied euphonium with other bass trombonists, believes that Ostrander was his finest instructor because he was so methodical in his teaching. Norton does not believe that Ostrander had natural talent as a bass trombonist, but instead had to learn the fundamentals like the average musician, with the exception that

³⁰Anderson, letter.

he had more determination than most. He considers Ostrander a thinking man, never approaching anything in life haphazardly. This quality made him a great teacher, composer, and arranger.³¹

Cravens, like Ostrander, demands precision in his students' playing, particularly in the area of correct rhythm, for he feels that most orchestral audition failures can be attributed to poor rhythm. Ostrander was not one to offer many compliments to his students. Cravens recalls that the best one he got was, "Well, that's pretty much what's there."³² Cravens studied with Ostrander for three years and thinks of him as one of the most interesting people he has known.³³

Although Everett, founding president of the International Trombone Association and now recognized authority on bass trombone literature, had only one lesson from Ostrander, he learned that he must be aware of exactly how his own students produce their tone in order to teach them to be consistent in their playing. Everett left his one lesson angry because he thought he was a better bass trombonist than Ostrander gave him credit for, but he

³¹Norton.

³²Cravens.

³³Ibid.

later realized that Ostrander had set such a high standard that it changed his own standard of playing. For Everett, Ostrander was very hard and demanding as a teacher, which made him want to play his best.³⁴

Everett has remained in contact with Ostrander over the years because of the assistance he received from Ostrander for his Annotated Guide to Bass Trombone Literature. While compiling material for his book, Everett periodically wrote to Ostrander to find out about music of which he knew about that Everett was not aware.³⁵

Ostrander constantly received music from many composers seeking his opinion and at one time had manuscripts of hundreds of bass trombone compositions of which few were ever published.³⁶ When Ostrander was active as a bass trombonist, Everett felt that he was a valuable source for finding original bass trombone compositions.³⁷

The writer's own views of Ostrander's teaching have formulated over a period of time since studying with him for one semester while doing graduate work at Ithaca College in the fall of 1978. Material used included the

³⁴Everett.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ostrander, interview by the writer.

³⁷Everett/

"Method for Bass Trombone" and Low Tone Studies, along with some duets and vocalises, although most of the lesson time was spent using his method. Ostrander kept a small three-ring black notebook in which he wrote down everything to be played for the next lesson and graded each thing when it was played. The lessons were purely business in their format with the intention of making the most of the time, beginning with the playing of some slow scales or lip slurs before playing the assigned material for the day. Occasionally more time was given to the scales and slurs than the other material, with special attention to rhythmic accuracy.

Usually if an etude were played as he wanted, the only remark made was to go on to the next one, indicating that the first was done right. The writer remembers one lesson in which the only thing he played was the three pages of thumb coordination exercises found in Ostrander's method, playing them tongued and slurred as well as using his valve editings. After he played them without stopping, Ostrander said that the writer was able to play them, much to his relief.

These lessons with Ostrander were somewhat overwhelming at the time, because he set a standard of playing not experienced before even after having studied previously with one of Ostrander's former students. Since that time, the material learned and techniques taught have been

appreciated and applied more to the writer's own playing and teaching. Ostrander's businesslike approach is applicable not only to teaching a lesson, but also to classroom and ensemble rehearsal. The writer believes that the most important aspect Ostrander taught him was how to be a good ensemble player by being sensitive to what others were playing around him.

Ostrander's teaching style echoed the meticulous detail he gave to his own playing while he was a student and during his professional career. He taught people how to be musicians regardless of their talent, developing them to be the best brass players they could be. Although the lessons were viewed from a businesslike attitude, it was important to Ostrander that the student be successful as a player within his own natural ability, whether he made a career as a professional musician or not. If he did, he knew how hard he worked ". . . to make good on the job."³⁸ John Mead, trombone instructor at Marshall University, recalls that Ostrander taught him to be a "chameleon," that is, to adapt to the situation he found himself involved with and to do his best.³⁹

³⁸Ostrander, interview by the writer.

³⁹Mead.

Ostrander's view toward music and teaching might be best described as a business, even though he knew he was in the art of making music. Mead recalls hearing Sidney Mear, former trumpet instructor at the Eastman School of Music, describe Ostrander as the personification of the businessman-trombonist.⁴⁰

⁴⁰Ibid.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY

Allen Ostrander had a solid beginning to his musical career and was grounded in the fundamentals of playing the trombone. His parents, who were well-trained amateur musicians, sought the best teachers for their son. Under Eddie Harris, his first trombone teacher, Ostrander received three years of instruction in basic trombone playing technique. Later Ostrander studied with Eddie's brother, Aaron, a former euphonium soloist with the bands of John Philip Sousa, Arthur Pryor, and Patrick Conway. Aaron continued to guide Ostrander's development as a trombonist by stressing advanced slide technique and articulation as well as teaching him all the major and minor scales.

While Ostrander was a high school student, he had few performance opportunities. He played trombone in his high school orchestra during the school year and with the American Band of Pittsfield, New Hampshire, near his parents' summer home. Occasionally, he performed solos with the band.

In 1928, Ostrander entered the Patrick Military Band School, affiliated with the Ithaca Conservatory of Music, to continue his trombone studies at the college level. Ostrander studied with Conway for approximately a year

before Conway's untimely death in 1929. Conway taught Ostrander how to play band music with precision in all areas of trombone playing, concentrating on "bread and butter" playing--notes in the trombone parts that fit in the accompaniment to the melodic line.

After Conway's death, Ernest Williams, bandmaster of the Kismet Shriner Band, cornet soloist, and composer of several trumpet methods and solos, was hired as a replacement at the band school. Using his own methods and Arban's Famous Method for teaching materials, Williams taught Ostrander how to improve his articulation, particularly double and triple tonguing.

Ostrander also studied orchestration with Williams and in the summer of 1929 began arranging band accompaniments for trombone solos. He performed these solos with Williams' band and became a featured soloist in concerts. These arrangements were probably lost in two separate fires in the music building at Ithaca College.

In 1930, Ostrander composed his first solo, called Polonaise, for tenor trombone and band. Later the title was changed to On the Fair Grounds and a piano reduction of the band score was completed by Marvin Salzberg. In 1956, Edition Musicus published this version.

Ostrander studied trombone with other teachers while a student at the band and the conservatory. During the summer of 1931, he took lessons from Gardell Simons while

attending the Ernest Williams School of Music, earning credits to transfer to Ithaca for his degree. When the fall semester began at Ithaca, Ostrander studied with Walter Beeler who had replaced Williams as the brass instructor.

Ostrander graduated in the spring of 1932 with a Bachelor of Science degree in instrumental music education. He then went to New York City where he was able to get a position with the National Orchestra Association (NOA) to begin preparing for a career as a professional trombonist. While playing with the NOA, Ostrander also continued his trombone studies with Simone Mantia, principal trombonist of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra.

While Ostrander was visiting his parents during a vacation in 1935, he received a telegram informing him of an audition for a trombone vacancy with the National Orchestra in Washington, D.C. Because of some misunderstanding of the telegram, he later learned that the position opening was for bass trombone. Even though he knew nothing about the bass trombone, he decided to audition for the position since he needed a job.

The audition took place in New York City, and since Ostrander did not own a bass trombone, he borrowed one from an individual who was also auditioning for the job. An agreement was reached that if Ostrander won the audition, he would buy the man's bass trombone for forty-five dollars.

Ostrander began immediately practicing on the instrument because he did not know very much about using the "F" attachment valve on it. Although he had copies of the audition music to practice, he spent most of his time experimenting with the instrument, trying to play the notes in tune using the valve. The following morning, much to his surprise, he learned he won the audition. After he won the audition, he took up residence with a family living in a large apartment in Constitution Hall where the National Symphony gave concerts. Much of his time was taken up by orchestra rehearsals and his own practice, which he desperately needed since he was learning how to play the bass trombone. He used a treble clef version of Arban's Famous Method for practice material by thinking the exercises in bass clef and mentally transposing them as he played them in all keys. He also used Rochut's Melodious Etudes for Trombone in a similar manner.

Ostrander's only lesson with a bass trombonist occurred during the 1935 Christmas holidays when he was visiting his parents in New Hampshire. He went to Boston to see Walter Lillibach, bass trombonist of the Boston Symphony, whom he had met while a member of NOA. For about twenty minutes Lillibach demonstrated for Ostrander the use of the valve on the instrument. The technique Ostrander learned was used throughout his career.

One of Ostrander's favorite pastimes while living in Washington was to visit the Library of Congress and search for trombone music. It was during one of these visits in 1935 that he found Praeludium, Chorale, Variations, and Fugue by J. I. Muller, a composition for bass trombone and organ written around 1839. Ostrander edited it to make a more interesting bass trombone solo and later had it published by Edition Musicus in 1959.

In 1937, Ostrander auditioned for the newly created NBC Symphony and won the second trombone position. He refused the position because he thought that he might be more comfortable playing bass trombone. He decided to stay with the National Symphony until he could find a position he liked.

Ostrander learned from Gardell Simons of a vacancy for bass trombone with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. He auditioned late in the summer of 1937, winning the position. He spent only one season, 1937-38, with the Pittsburgh Symphony.

In the spring of 1938, Ostrander was contacted by Simone Mantia about a bass trombone vacancy for the 1938-39 season with the NBC Symphony. Ostrander was interested in the position because of the prestige and higher salary paid by the orchestra. An audition was arranged for Ostrander to play in the presence of Toscanini, the

conductor, and Leopold Spitalny, personnel manager. A few days after the audition, Ostrander was informed that he had won the position.

The type of work Ostrander did at NBC was varied. His principal duty was to perform with the NBC Symphony for its live radio broadcasts. His other responsibilities were recording projects with the symphony and playing with the studio orchestra which provided background music for live radio shows.

In 1939, Ostrander contacted the C. G. Conn Company of Elkhart, Indiana, regarding some changes he wanted made on his bass trombone. He wanted a longer tuning slide for the F valve so that when the slide was fully extended, he could play a low B in tune. Conn's engineer designed an instrument for him, but he decided not to use the new hand slide. Instead, he used the new bell section with its longer F valve tuning slide with his old hand slide.

By the time Ostrander had his new bass trombone, World War II had started. In 1943, Ostrander decided to join the United States Army and was placed in a military band at an ammunition depot near Thomasville, Georgia. After the war was over in 1945, Ostrander was released from the military and returned to his position with the NBC Symphony. He arrived in New York City a few days before Thanksgiving

and was contacted by Maurice Van Praag, personnel manager of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, asking him to substitute for the bass trombonist who was ill. The orchestra was performing a concert featuring the music of Wagner and needed four trombonists. Ostrander agreed and during the concert intermission, he was asked to become the regular bass trombonist with the New York Philharmonic's 1946-47 season. Ostrander agreed as long as the current bass trombonist was informed of his dismissal first to avoid any ethical impropriety.

When Ostrander began his first season with the New York Philharmonic, there were two other new trombonists, Gordon Pulis, principal, and Lewis Van Haney, second. Since all three were new to the orchestra, they immediately began rehearsing the music for the first concert as a section so that they were ready for the first rehearsal. This method of rehearsing together as a trombone section continued into the mid-1950's.

In 1946, Ostrander was asked by the Juilliard School of Music to teach Julian Menken, a bass trombone student. Since there was no bass trombone method book available for Menken to use in his lessons, Ostrander began writing etudes by adapting bass trombone parts of orchestral music as well as material from Gardell Simons's method book, and by using his own ideas. In 1948, Carl Fischer, Incorporated, published the etudes for Ostrander as Method for Bass Trombone

and Tenor Trombone with F. Attachment. This was the first method book for the instrument.

From 1947 to 1949, the New York Philharmonic played under several guest conductors, including Leopold Stokowski. He was particularly fond of the trombone and tuba section and featured it in two separate concerts. The first was on March 10, 1947, when the three trombonists and the tubist performed Beethoven's Drei Equale. On November 3, 1949, these same musicians performed Concerto Grosso for Three Solo Trombones, Tuba, and Orchestra. This work was composed especially for them by Arcady Dubensky, a violist with the New York Philharmonic.

Stokowski served as co-conductor of the New York Philharmonic from 1949 to 1951. During that time, he formed an orchestra consisting of musicians from the New York City area including Ostrander, Van Haney, Pulis, and Bill Bell, tubist. The main function of this orchestra was to make recordings dubbed as "Stokowski and his orchestra."

In 1951, Dimitri Mitropoulos became the musical director of the New York Philharmonic. Under his leadership, the orchestra's musicians began to perform more concerts, go on tours, and have a longer orchestra season. This enabled them to increase their income and make living in New York City more plausible. The orchestra viewed

Mitropoulos as a friend because of his assistance in developing more performing opportunities. Ostrander believes, though, that the performances the orchestra gave under Mitropoulos were rather sloppy, perhaps because of Mitropoulos's unwillingness to discipline the orchestra.

Throughout the time, the three trombonists continued practicing together, occasionally including the tubist with them. Around the mid-1950's, they stopped these extra rehearsals because of the additional work schedule. By this time, Pulis's alcoholism had affected his playing to the extent that he was fired from the orchestra. Edward Herman became the new principal trombonist.

In 1954, Ostrander started a second book for bass trombone and tenor trombone with F attachment. The F Attachment and Bass Trombone uses the same procedures as his earlier method, except that it is more concise and the etudes are somewhat easier. Ostrander composed it in similar fashion, using orchestral excerpts, song literature, and his own ideas. The book was published by Charles Colin in 1956 and sold at a more economical price than Ostrander's first method book and remains a popular method even today.

Ostrander's interest in composing and arranging continued through the late 1950's during the summer while he was teaching at the New England Music Camp. Among his books for bass trombone composed during this period was

Twenty Minute Warm-Up. This book was based on ideas which Ostrander used for his warm-up routine in preparation for playing with the New York Philharmonic. While teaching at the music camp, Ostrander learned that most of the students did not have an organized approach to warming up on their instruments, so he composed this book for them. It was published by Charles Colin in 1959.

Ostrander composed two solos for himself to play at the camp also during this time. Concert Piece in Fugal Style was written during the winter of 1958-59 and performed at the New England Music Camp that same summer. The other work, Sonata in g minor for unaccompanied bass trombone, was modeled after the unaccompanied cello suites by Bach. One other solo that Ostrander edited during the late fifties for bass trombone was a tuba solo by A. Lebedev, Concerto in One Movement.

Ostrander was also involved with the development of the double valve bass trombone during the mid-1950's. He had abandoned his own design for a double valve bass trombone with the second valve tuned to E, in favor of one by Kauko Kahila, bass trombonist of the Boston Symphony. Ostrander, along with Louis Counihan, bass trombonist with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, assisted Kahila with the design. Counihan suggested the use of rollers on the valves similar to those found on saxophone keys to

facilitate the thumb motion from the F valve to the E valve. Ostrander recommended that the braces in the bell section nearest the valves be restructured for better weight distribution. The instrument, manufactured by the Reynolds Musical Instrument Company, was made available for purchase in 1958. Although Ostrander is often given the credit for the design and development of the double valve bass trombone, he believes that Kahila should receive it.

Ostrander continued teaching during the time, serving as an adjunct instructor at the Hartt School of Music in Connecticut and Columbia University as well as teaching privately.

In 1957, the board of directors appointed Leonard Bernstein as the musical director of the New York Philharmonic. Under Bernstein's leadership, the orchestra made many recordings, extensive international tours, and performed a greater variety of music, including jazz. Ostrander continued working on various compositional projects, including a set of etudes published by Robert King Music Company in 1966 called Shifting Meter Studies. He had compiled lists of unusual time signatures, writing out difficult rhythmic patterns found in orchestral music, and searching bass trombone music for the notes C and B below the staff. Eventually, he composed the etudes

based on the information he found. He also edited some of the vocalises of Marco Bordogni for bass trombone. Although some are the same as those found in Joannes Rochut's Melodious Etudes for Trombone, Ostrander put them in lower keys and shortened the phrases to suit the bass trombone. After solving problems involving copyright laws and the use of public domain material, Ostrander was able to have them published by Carl Fischer in 1970.

During a tour of England under Bernstein, Ostrander purchased a two-volume set of bass trombone studies by Boris Grigoriev from Musica Rara Publishers. After examining them he decided that they should be published in the United States. Ostrander selected the studies which he thought were the best and had them published by International Music Company in 1970.

From 1966 to 1968, Ostrander taught at the Juilliard School of Music, as well as teaching a few private students. The New York Philharmonic's concert and recording schedule kept him busy almost year round, preventing him from doing much teaching.

Ostrander and his wife, Ann, were divorced in 1968. He continued living in the New Jersey suburbs of New York City and began attending the Bethany United Methodist Church. While attending this church, he periodically played trombone solos for the church services. In 1971,

he began a major project with the church minister, Hai-Jong Kim, of coordinating arias appropriate with the sermons Kim was planning to preach. Ostrander compiled extensive lists of arias and arranged them for himself to perform without accompaniment. He missed performing in church only five Sundays in 1971 and continued performing on occasion at the Bethany United Methodist Church until his retirement from the New York Philharmonic in 1975.

The New York Philharmonic employed the services of Pierre Boulez as musical director after Bernstein left in 1969. Boulez proved to be an unpopular conductor to the orchestra's musicians and some of its audience because he programmed a great many avant-garde compositions. Ostrander believed that the orchestra's musicianship suffered as well.

In 1973, the musicians of the New York Philharmonic went on strike for a better salary and an improved retirement program. Ostrander, a member of the American Federation of Musicians Local 802, supported the strike and actively participated by carrying picket signs. He was interested in the outcome of the strike because it directly affected him. He had been planning to retire before he reached the New York Philharmonic's mandatory retirement age of sixty-five, but decided to wait until after the strike to see if the benefits improved. Upon

seeing that the benefits did improve, Ostrander waited until the end of the 1975 season to retire. The New York Philharmonic held a brief ceremony during the intermission of a concert on March 25, 1975, to honor Ostrander by presenting him a watch and a plaque.

Before retiring, Ostrander edited some studies taken from Ernest William's Method for Transposition, a trumpet book Ostrander used while learning to play the bass trombone. He wanted to publish them in honor of Williams and entitled them Double-Valve Bass Trombone Low-Tone Studies. Charles Colin, owner of the Williams music catalog, published them in 1975.

After Ostrander retired from the orchestra, he moved to Ithaca, New York, because of its serene, small-town atmosphere and the musical opportunities offered by Ithaca College and Cornell University. He taught trombone for one year at Ithaca College while continuing to play his instrument. He published a set of four of Bach's two-part inventions arranged for two bass trombones, two tubas, or bass trombone and tuba, through Kendor Music in 1976. Later in 1979, he arranged a bass aria from In the African Jungle by Handel. Ostrander entitled the aria The Lion and Kendor Music published it in 1979.

In 1983, Ostrander suffered a mild heart attack, subsequently giving up performing and selling his

instruments. He composed one final book, Basic Techniques for the Double Valve Bass Trombone, published by Robert King Music Company in 1988. This method was composed for bass trombonists to learn to play the in-line independent double valve bass trombone.

Throughout his career, Ostrander was fairly active as a teacher of brass instruments. Much of his instruction was based on what he had learned from his former teachers—Conway, Williams, Beeler, Simons, Mantia, and Lillibach. His emphasis was on the fundamentals of tone quality, intonation, articulation, slurring and phrasing, with tone quality stressed as the most important. Ostrander used vocalises to develop a full tone quality because they are not technically demanding, thus allowing the student to concentrate on the tone.

To develop good intonation, Ostrander believed that slow practice of scales and arpeggios helps the student to listen carefully and to focus on the quality of the tone. Tone quality is very important to good intonation, according to Ostrander.

Many of Ostrander's former students recall the emphasis which he placed on rhythmical control and clear articulation. Ostrander encouraged students to subdivide in their minds as they played scales in order to keep all the notes the same rhythmical value.

Ostrander's method for teaching articulation was to compare it to the elasticity of a tennis ball when it bounces. This same elasticity is needed for the tongue's action in order to produce consistent articulation.

For slurring and phrasing, he advocated that the student practice slurs covering two or three notes rather than the entire range of the instrument. In addition, Ostrander believed that the study and practice of song literature is essential to learn correct phrasing.

In regard to teaching bass trombonists, Ostrander believed that the most important technique to learn was the use of the valve. Former students all agree that this was his main emphasis of his teaching, but also note additional concepts such as sagging the lips for low register notes and using "T" for articulating low notes, rather than "Th."

Former students believe that Ostrander offered an extremely high standard of performance and agree that their own playing improved as a result. Ostrander demanded precision and accuracy in every detail of his own playing and expected the same from his students.

Conclusion

After conducting interviews with Ostrander, corresponding with his former students, colleagues, and others, as well as doing other research, several conclusions can

be drawn. These conclusions focus not only on Ostrander as a musician but also on his character qualities.

Ostrander's early training had much to do with his future success as a bass trombonist. He studied with some of the finest brass players of his time when he was a tenor trombonist and later applied their techniques to his bass trombone playing. In addition to what he learned from his teachers, Ostrander was a self-motivated individual who wanted to learn as much as possible and then put it into practice. He had a goal of becoming a professional musician and thus had a desire to be the best he could possibly be as a trombonist.

As Ostrander began his career as a professional bass trombonist, it became important for him to know the right people at the right time. He considers himself lucky to have been able to call upon friends and former teachers to help him move up to better orchestras. Although he believes this was an important part of his climb to success, there is no doubt that his own many hours of practice on the bass trombone were a major factor.

Once Ostrander became a bass trombonist, he developed a deep love for the instrument. He sought ways to improve his performance techniques by basically teaching himself to play the instrument. He was also

interested in improving the design of the instrument as demonstrated by his work with the C. G. Conn Company, as well as his work with Kahila and Counihan on the design of the double valve bass trombone.

Another indication of Ostrander's love of the bass trombone is the methods, etudes, and solos he composed or arranged. His material is significant not only because it is some of the first produced for the bass trombone, but also because of its current use throughout the world. The methods are based on what he learned from his teachers, making these methods an important link between late twentieth century bass trombone playing and earlier styles. His success as a composer and arranger were helped by his orchestration studies with Williams while a student at the Ithaca Conservatory, as well as his own experimentation and practice.

Ostrander says that he did not like teaching and this is one of the puzzling elements to this writer. It appears, though, that he gave as much emphasis to teaching as any area of his musical career. Many important bass trombonists as well as other brass players attest to the rigorous demands he placed upon them in their lessons. He expected them to conform to the same high standard of playing that he expected of himself. It may be that his dislike for teaching was due to a sense that some students

were unable to achieve that standard, causing him to be frustrated. Still, he will probably be viewed as one of the great brass teachers of the twentieth century.

Ostrander looked upon music as a business without forsaking its artistic characteristics. Playing with professional orchestras, composing and arranging, and teaching were all parts of making a living, but he carefully made sure that he maintained the highest musical standards in all that he did. The combination of being a businessman and musician played a major role in his success. Ostrander proved to be the consummate musician as performer, composer, teacher, and businessman.

There are certain character qualities that stand out in Ostrander's personality. He is, first, a man of integrity. Two major incidents in his life lead to this conclusion. One is his refusal to sign a contract with the New York Philharmonic until the other bass trombonist was notified of his release. Ostrander thought that this was the most ethical method of dealing with the problem. The second incident was the copyright problem which he encountered with his Melodious Etudes for Bass Trombone. The resolution of this problem involved the destruction of hundreds of pages of manuscript that he had worked on to avoid any appearance of impropriety.

Ostrander is also a meek and humble person. He prefers to give others credit for improvements in the bass trombone and its music by always pointing out what others had done and why the things they did were more important than his contributions. The double valve bass trombone may always be regarded as his major contribution to bass trombone playing, but he sincerely believes that Kauko Kahila deserves full credit for its invention. Ostrander seems to be particularly disturbed that he receives so much credit for it and is insistent that the record be set straight.

How Ostrander will be viewed in the future remains to be seen. Since he stopped playing in 1983, his popularity has waned somewhat with bass trombonists. At the same time his legacy will continue through his former students and, more importantly, through his method books. For all musicians, Ostrander serves as a role model through his diligence in practice, high standard of musicianship, and integrity.

Suggestions for Further Research

The study of Allen Ostrander's life as a musician opens up other areas for further research relating to different aspects of the bass trombone. These areas are other orchestral bass trombonists, the development of the

double valve bass trombone, and comparative studies of bass trombone method books composed since Ostrander's first one in 1948.

Some bass trombonists deserving additional research include Walter Lillibach (a member of the Boston Symphony at the time Ostrander knew him) and Edward Kleinhammer, formerly with the Chicago Symphony. Lillibach is evidently one of the earliest trombonists who considered himself a true bass trombonist. Since he is the gentleman who taught Ostrander how to use the valve and Ostrander applied the techniques in his method book, it seems appropriate that more be learned of him. Kleinhammer is recognized for his achievements because of his career with the Chicago Symphony and his text The Art of Playing the Trombone. The International Trombone Association has done a great service for bass trombonists by publishing interviews of him in its journal. Yet they do not give the details that might give a better understanding of his playing and teaching for those who have heard him only on recordings or read his book.

The bass trombone has gone through many changes since the double valve model was developed in 1957. One in-depth study of the differences between the various manufacturing processes of bass trombones including design, size, and valve construction is suggested. This type of study might

be historical also as one follows the development beginning in 1957 to the present time.

Several bass trombone method books have been published since Ostrander's in 1948 by bass trombonists throughout the world. A comparative study of these methods based on how they were composed and the approach to playing the instrument could serve those who teach bass trombone.

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APPENDIX A

OSTRANDER'S PUBLISHED MUSIC

Bass Trombone Methods and Etudes

<u>Basic Techniques for the Double Valve Bass Trombone</u>	King
<u>The F Attachment and Bass Trombone</u>	Colin
<u>Low Tone Studies (Williams)</u>	_____
<u>Melodious Etudes for Bass Trombone (Bordogni)</u>	Fischer
<u>Method for Bass Trombone and F Attachment for Tenor Trombone</u>	_____
<u>Shifting Meter Studies</u>	King
<u>Twenty Minute Warm-Up</u>	Colin
<u>Twenty-Four Studies for Bass Trombone (Grigoriev)</u>	International

Bass Trombone Solos

<u>Concert Piece in Fugal Style</u>	Edition Musicus
<u>Concerto in One Movement (Lebedev)</u>	_____
<u>The Lion (Handel)</u>	Kendor
<u>Praeludium, Chorale, Variations, and Fugue (Muller)</u>	Edition Musicus
<u>Sonata in g minor</u>	_____

Bass Trombone Duets

<u>Four Two-Part Inventions (J. S. Bach)</u>	Kendor
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Tenor Trombone Etudes

<u>Clef Studies</u> (Blazehevich)	International
<u>Fifty-Six Studies</u> (Gaetke)	_____
<u>Five Concert Studies</u> , Op. 23 (Reuter)	_____
<u>Four Solo Suites</u> (Vobaron)	Edition Musicus
<u>Legato Studies</u> (Blazehevich)	International
<u>Nine Studies</u> (Pfleger)	_____
<u>Ten Caprices</u> (Bleger)	_____
<u>Thirty-One Studies</u> (Bleger)	_____
<u>Three Advanced Studies</u> (J. C. Bach)	Edition Musicus
<u>Twenty-Four Studies</u> (Paudert)	International

Tenor Trombone Solos

<u>Air de Lia</u> (Debussy)	Edition Musicus
<u>Antique Airs</u> (Mensigny, Lully, Adam)	_____
<u>Apres un Reves</u> (Faure)	_____
Aria from <u>Don Carlos</u> (Verdi)	_____
<u>Arioso</u> (Cirri)	_____
<u>Arm, Arm Ye Brave</u> (Handel)	_____
<u>At Devotions</u> (Lassen)	_____
<u>Berceuse</u> (Stravinsky)	_____
<u>Calf of God</u> (Gounod)	_____
<u>Cantileno</u> (Rubenstein)	_____
<u>Concertino in B^b</u> (Sachse)	International
<u>Concerto</u> K. 191 (Mozart)	Edition Musicus
<u>Concerto in a minor</u> (Vivaldi)	_____

<u>Concerto in f minor</u> (Lauga)	_____
<u>Concerto No. 5 in B Flat, Major</u> (Blazehevich)	International
<u>Concerto No. 10 in F Major</u> (Blazehevich)	_____
<u>Dance of the Princesses</u> (Stravinsky)	Edition Musicus
<u>Four Preludes</u> (Shostakovich)	_____
<u>Herod's Air</u> (Massenet)	_____
<u>Honor and Arms</u> (Handel)	_____
<u>If With All Your Hearts</u> (Mendelssohn)	Southern
<u>Lament</u> (J. C. Bach)	Edition Musicus
<u>Lord, Preserve Me</u> (Rossini)	_____
<u>Lyric Prelude</u> (Raphling)	_____
<u>Minstrels Canzonet</u> (Tchaikovsky)	_____
<u>Morgen</u> (R. Strauss)	_____
<u>On the Fair Grounds</u>	_____
<u>Patron of the Wind</u> (J. S. Bach)	_____
<u>Pavane pour une Infante defunte</u> (Ravel)	_____
<u>Polifemo's Air</u> (Handel)	Southern
<u>Romance From Lt. Kije</u> (Prokofieff)	Edition Musicus
<u>Romance</u> (Saint-Saens)	_____
<u>Rondo</u> (Beethoven)	_____
<u>Solo From Symphony No. 3</u> (Mahler)	_____
<u>Sonata in a minor</u> (Marcello)	International
<u>Sonata in F Major</u> (Corelli)	Edition Musicus

<u>Sonata in F Major</u> (Marcello)	_____
<u>Sonata in f minor</u> (Telemann)	_____
<u>Sonata in g minor</u> (Corelli)	Edition Musicus
<u>Sonata in g minor</u> (Marcello)	International
<u>Sonata No. 1 in B Flat Major</u> (Vivaldi)	_____
<u>Sonata No. 2 in F Major</u> (Vivaldi)	_____
<u>Sonata No. 3 in a minor</u> (Vivaldi)	_____
<u>Sonata No. 4 in B Flat Major</u> (Vivaldi)	_____
<u>Sonata No. 5 in e minor</u> (Vivaldi)	_____
<u>Sonata No. 6 in B Flat Major</u> (Vivaldi)	_____
<u>Song of Praise</u> (Tchaikovsky)	Edition Musicus
<u>Song of the Flea</u> (Mussorgsky)	_____
<u>Sonnet</u> (Maganini)	_____
<u>Suite in c minor</u> (Vivaldi)	_____
<u>Swan Song</u> (Schubert)	_____
<u>Thunder, Lightning, and</u> <u>Whistling Wind</u> (Handel)	_____
<u>Total Eclipse</u> (Handel)	Southern
<u>The Unknown Isle</u> (Berlioz)	Edition Musicus

Tenor Trombone Solo Collections

<u>Album of Nine Classical Pieces</u>	International
<u>Concert Album</u>	Edition Musicus
<u>Paris Soir</u>	_____

Trombone Duets

<u>Excerpts from the Trojans and Damnation of Faust</u> (Berlioz)	Edition Musicus
<u>Five Duets</u> (Concone)	Kendor
<u>Four Preludes</u> (Shostakevich)	Edition Musicus
<u>Sonata in g minor</u> (Corelli)	_____
<u>Suite in g</u> (Bacquet)	_____
<u>Twelve Duets</u> (Bleger)	International
<u>Twenty-Four Easy Duets</u> (Henning)	_____
<u>Virtuoso Studies</u> (Dieppo)	Edition Musicus

Trombone Duets with Piano

<u>Four Preludes</u> (Shostakovich)	Edition Musicus
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Trombone Trios

<u>At the Stable in Bethlehem</u> (Berlioz)	Edition Musicus
<u>Suite</u> (Mozart)	_____
<u>Suite from Mount of Olives</u>	_____
<u>Suite of Six Pieces</u> (Handel)	_____

Trombone Quintets

<u>The Hunter's Farewell</u> (Mendelssohn)	Edition Musicus
<u>Suite from the Damnation of Faust</u> (Berlioz)	_____

Trombone Choir

<u>Holy is God the Lord</u> (Mendelssohn)	Ensemble
<u>Verspiel Act III from Die Meistersinger</u> (Wagner)	Kendor

Brass Duets

Ten Duets on Handel Themes (Ostrander) _____

Brass Duets with Piano

Duet Album (Ostrander) .

Edition Musicus

Brass Trios

Suite for Three (Ostrander)

Edition Musicus

Brass Quartets

Baroque Suite (Ostrander)

Edition Musicus

Chorus of the Jugglers (Berlioz)

Fugue No. 74 (J. S. Bach)

Tiranna (Forestier)

Trumpet Duets

First Pals (Ostrander)

Edition Musicus

APPENDIX B
PERMISSION LETTERS

**New York
Philharmonic**

Avery Fisher Hall 10 Lincoln Center Plaza, New York, NY 10023-6973 (212) 875-5000 Fax: (212) 875-5717

October 7, 1991

Mr. Ronald G. Smith
217 St. Eusebia Street
Pensacola, FL 32503

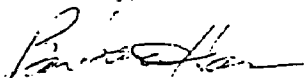
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Sincerely,



Barbara Haws
Archivist/Historian



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August 6, 1991

Mr. Ronald G. Smith
217 St. Eusebia St.
Pensacola, FL 32503

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We hereby grant you permission to reproduce the following copyrighted excerpts in your doctoral dissertation entitled "The Life and Work of the Orchestral Bass Trombonist, Allen Ostrander and the Development of His Bass Trombone Methods and Solos" which you are preparing at Louisiana State University.

Ostrander METHOD FOR BASS TROMBONE

Page 4, no.5; page 6, no.6; pages 29-30, no.13.

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I am writing to request permission to reprint the following material from your publication:

Allen Ostrander, The F Attachment and Bass Trombone, 1956
by New sounds in Modern Music

page 21, no. 45

page 38, Allegro Tempo di Valse from Sleeping Beauty Ballet Suite lines 6 and 7.

This material is to appear as originally published in the following work:

Ronald Smith, "The life and Work of the Orchestral Bass Trombonist, Allen Ostrander, and the Development of His Bass Trombone Methods and Solos, app. 200 pages.

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Sincerely,

Ronald G. Smith

Ronald G. Smith

Yes - go ahead -

Please include our

index to:
5053.4.199 10019

Good luck -
Colin

VITA

Ronald Gene Smith was born in Chesapeake, Ohio, on April 13, 1954. A graduate of Chesapeake High School in 1972, he received a music scholarship to Marshall University and received the Bachelor of Arts degree in music education in 1976.

Mr. Smith attended Ithaca College where he served as a Graduate Assistant and received the Master of Music in education in 1978.

In 1978, he was appointed band director for Huntington Christian Academy, Huntington, West Virginia. He began the band program and served as its first director.

In 1980, Mr. Smith was appointed as Brass Instructor of Pensacola Christian College, Pensacola, Florida. Since that appointment, he has also taught courses in theory, history, methodology as well as serving as conductor of the orchestra, brass choir, symphonic choir, and chamber ensemble.

Mr. Smith's performances have included appearances as bass trombonist with the Mel Gillispie Orchestra, Johnny Long Orchestra, Huntington Chamber Orchestra, Pensacola Symphony, Pensacola Choral Society Orchestra, and the Perdido Brass Quintet. He has also given numerous faculty recitals.

Currently, Mr. Smith is Chairman of the Music Department at Pensacola Christian College.

DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

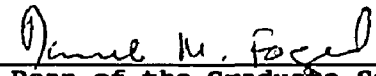
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Major Field: Music (Performance)

Title of Dissertation: The Life and Work of the Orchestral Bass Trombonist, Allen Ostrander, and the Development of His Bass Trombone Methods and Solos

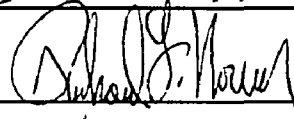
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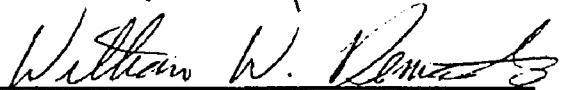

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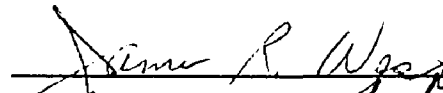
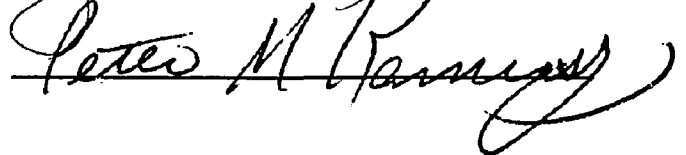

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EXAMINING COMMITTEE:







Date of Examination:

April 3, 1992