

# Addressing Issues of Technique and Style in Tenor Trombone Repertoire



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## Project

This research project focused on the study of style and technique in two standard trombone solos, Launy Grøndahl's Concerto for Trombone and Orchestra and Camille Saint-Saëns Cavatine for Trombone and Piano, Op. 14. Specifically, the authors examined related etudes and technical methods and their application to both solos. The Concerto and Cavatine are considered standard tenor trombone repertoire and there is currently no "study guide" available for trombone students. The following material will present a brief analysis and a short discussion of applicable exercises and etudes to serve as a study guide.

## Composers

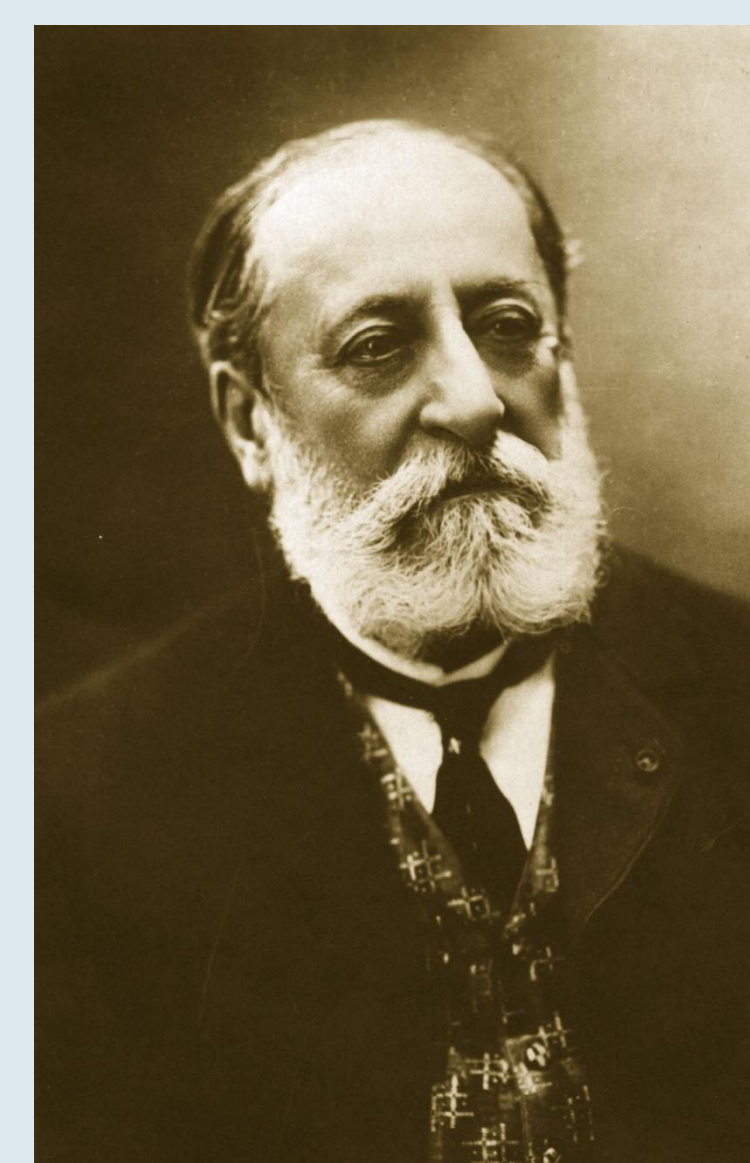
### Launy Grøndahl (1886-1960)

Grøndahl studied violin and composition in Denmark from the age of eight. At thirteen he was a violinist in the orchestra of the Casino Theater in Copenhagen, Denmark. As a young composer he wrote a symphony, two string quartets, and a violin concerto. While studying in Italy in 1924, Grøndahl wrote the Concerto for Trombone and Orchestra. It is thought that Grøndahl had the trombone section of the Royal Orchestra in Copenhagen in mind when he wrote the piece.



### Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)

Saint-Saëns, a French composer, was a child prodigy. At the age of two, he could already read and write. He began piano lessons at the age of three, and then almost immediately began composing. At ten years old, he gave public recitals and performed the music of Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart. At sixteen, he wrote his first symphony. Saint-Saëns was a prolific composer, noted for his work, The Carnival of the Animals. Saint-Saëns wrote Cavatine, Op. 144 in 1915.



## Application

### Launy Grøndahl - Concerto for Trombone and Orchestra

| Things to Focus On                          | Resources to Help  |
|---|--|
| Style                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Etude Books: <i>Wind and Song</i> - Arnold Jacobs, Jean Baptiste Arban – <i>Famous Method</i></li> <li>•Recordings: Christian Lindberg- <i>Romantic Trombone Concertos</i> (1988), Joseph Alessi- <i>Slide Area</i> (1992)</li> </ul>  |
| Intonation, especially of arpeggiated notes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The use of Smart Music, and playing with the accompaniment will help provide knowledge of harmonies</li> <li>•The use of a tuner to check pitch on tricky notes, as well as a drone on the fifth or the octave will provide a basis for intonation</li> </ul>  |
| Intonation and clarity of low range         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Etude Books: <i>Advanced Embouchure Studies for Bass Trombone</i>- Phil Teele, <i>Lip Slurs</i>- Brad Edwards, <i>Unaccompanied Suites</i>- J.S. Bach trans. by Ralph Sauer</li> <li>•Playing with the accompaniment, a tuner, and a drone will improve intonation, which will have a direct effect on the clarity of the low range</li> </ul> |
| Time issues of each section                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Use a metronome emphasizing both the macro and micro beats (only on beat 1 versus on all 3 beats) to develop a more solid sense of time and flow.</li> </ul>   |
| Sixteenth and eighth note triplets          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Etude Books: <i>60 Technical Studies</i>-Warwick Tyrell, Jean Baptiste Arban – <i>Famous Method</i></li> <li>•Utilizing a metronome on the micro beats will help place the sixteenth note rhythms in the correct spot. Using the metronome slow to fast on these rhythms will help also.</li> </ul>  |
| High Range                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Etude Books: <i>Upper Register Extensions</i>- John Marcellus, <i>Buddy Baker Tenor Trombone Method</i>- Buddy Baker</li> <li>•Playing scales going up to the high range will increase efficiency</li> </ul>   |

### Camille Saint-Saëns – Cavatine for Trombone and Piano

| Things to Focus On             | Resources to Help   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Style                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Etude Books: <i>The Trombone Virtuoso: an Advance Method</i>- Simone Mantia</li> <li>•Recordings: Christian Lindberg- <i>The Romantic Trombone</i>, Joseph Alessi- <i>The Swan</i>- <i>Slide Area</i> (1992)</li> </ul>   |
| Accented quarter notes         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Listening to recordings and mimicking what one hears will help place the correct type of accent on each note.</li> <li>•Recording practice and listening back is a useful tool for this aspect.</li> <li>•Etude Books: <i>Selected Studies (60) op 6 v.1-</i> Kopprasch, Jean Baptiste Arban – <i>Famous Method</i></li> <li>•Taking the patterns and applying them to scales will help effectively practice this technique.</li> </ul> |
| Time                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Use a metronome emphasizing both the macro and micro beats (only on beat 1 versus on all 3 beats) to develop a more solid sense of time and flow.</li> </ul>  |
| Scalar patterns                | <i>Rubank Advanced Method for Trombone</i> - William Gower, Himie Voxman  |
| Intonation                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The use of Smart Music, and playing with the accompaniment will help provide knowledge of harmonies</li> <li>•The use of a tuner to check pitch on tricky notes, as well as a drone on the fifth or the octave will provide a basis for intonation</li> </ul>   |
| High Range                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Etude Books: <i>Upper Register Extensions</i>- John Marcellus, <i>Buddy Baker Tenor Trombone Method</i>- Buddy Baker</li> <li>•Playing scales going up to the high range will increase efficiency</li> </ul>  |
| Playing comfortably in E Major | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Etude Books: <i>Vocalises</i>- Bordogni/Rochut, <i>Concone Legato Etudes</i>- Shoemaker #4, 36, 66, 72, 76, 80, 84</li> <li>•Playing scales and scalar patterns in the key of E will improve consistency and security.</li> </ul>   |

## Analysis

### Concerto for Trombone and Orchestra- First Movement

**Melody** – An initial eighth note arpeggiated motive opens the first movement and is present throughout in several different key areas. Various scalar sixteenth note melodic patterns support and ornament the first theme. The second theme is characterized by lyric romantic writing.

**Harmony** – While the harmony supports the basic framework of the form, there are frequent modulations in the first movement which create a fluid and complex style. The first movement begins in F Minor, moves to Gb Major for the second theme and modulates freely in the development, returning to F minor for the recapitulation.

**Rhythm** – Arpeggiated accented eighth notes in  $\frac{3}{4}$  appear frequently throughout the piece, accompanied by a sixteenth note ostinato. There is an obvious contrast between articulated passages of the first theme and legato, lyrical, melodic second theme. The rhythm is affected by the frequent rubato.

**Texture** – Grøndahl's fine orchestration is highlighted by a large scale symphonic approach. His writing parallels that of other Scandinavian composers, notable Sibelius. Solo woodwinds offer unique contrast to the typical string accompaniment of the majority of the trombone concert repertoire. Lush string writing in the second theme offers a sharp contrast to the driving wind articulations accompanying the first theme.

**Form** – The first movement is written in the standard first movement concerto form – Sonata Allegro. Again, the use of rubato and transitions are unique to Grøndahl's Trombone Concerto.

### Cavatine for Trombone and Piano

**Melody** – The opening arpeggiated motive is developed throughout the piece. The motive is typically followed by scalar passages. The second slower section also draws upon both the arpeggiated and scalar motives introduced in the opening. While the rhythm of the melody is the strongest feature, it is still reminiscent of Saint-Saëns composition for voice.

**Harmony** – Cavatine opens in Db major and modulates to E major for the second section. The piece returns to Db major for the recapitulation. The harmony supports the form and the key areas are a third apart – a common tone modulation. Within each larger section, the harmony modulates, but sparingly.

**Rhythm** – Arpeggiated accented quarter notes in  $\frac{3}{4}$  appear frequently throughout the piece. There are some syncopated patterns using  $\frac{3}{4}$  quarter notes, and eighth note scalar patterns throughout as well. Most notable is the rhythmic interplay between the trombone and piano in the faster opening and closing sections.

**Texture** – Saint-Saëns' gift for rhythmic counterpoint between trombone and piano is evident throughout Cavatine. While the piece is for trombone and piano, Saint-Saëns borrows from his orchestral style of composition.

**Form** – Ternary form. Each section is followed by a logical transition that is supported by gentle changes in texture and harmony.