55

PHRASING STUDIES

for

TROMBONE

by

JAROSLAV CIMERA

FOREWORD

One of the greatest problems for trombone players is proper breathing after quarter notes. Always remember to take a deep breath when playing melodies even if the phrase is short. Be sure to give all quarter notes at the end of each phrase its full value without breaking the rhythm. Be prepared to take a quick breath in order to properly execute the next phrase.

Try not to use any tonguing on intervals that are natural slurs. Be sure to make all such slurs without using the tongue, thereby making the melody sound smoother. Be sure to use broad tonguing with very little space between tones when phrase is not slurred in any way.

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Foreward

As the title implies, 55 Phrasing Studies is a method book aimed at assisting aspiring trombonists in their efforts to become masters of the musical phrase. Specifically, in the book's original foreword, Cimera encourages the trombonist to focus on not clipping notes before breaths. While this book serves this purpose well, in my experiences, I have found it to be useful on so many different levels, catering to almost every area of trombone fundamentals.

This book is comprised of simple, short, tonal melodies. The simplicity of the melodies allows the trombonist to quickly move focus from note-learning to concept work. For example, these melodies are perfect for range studies. After playing the melody as written, play it in tenor clef (mentally changing the key signature, of course). Then, play it in tenor clef 8vb. Continue expanding range building by performing them in alto clef, as is 8vb, as is 8va, tenor clef 15vb and so on.

Finding another trombonist to play the melodies in octaves (as is or in tenor clef) is invaluable for intonation. One can also use them for individual intonation improvement by playing them over a tonic drone.

The other specific note Cimera made in the original foreward is to be sure to use natural slurs wherever possible. These exercises work very well for teaching early trombonists where the natural slurs occur on the instrument.

The simplicity of the melodies also caters well to the study of musicality. Each melody is structured in such a way that it makes it easy for young trombonists to establish appropriate shape to each individual phrase. The melodies make for great exercises in musical "story-telling."

Although this book was originally written with early trombonists in mind, its versatility in application to various trombone fundamentals makes it a great resource for the advanced trombonist as well.

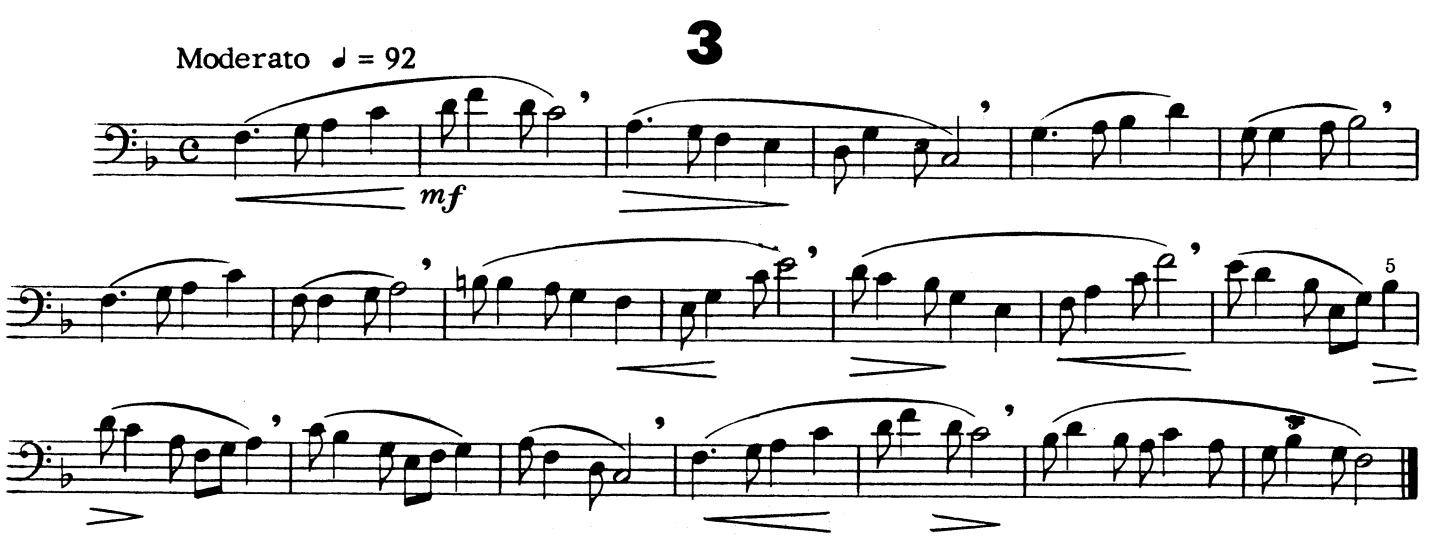
I would like to personally thank my former instructor, Peter Ellefson for sharing this incredible learning tool with me and countless other students throughout his successful teaching career.

Dr. Cory Mixdorf

Jaroslav Cimera

Jaroslav Cimera came to the United States from Bohemia with his family at the age of nine. His American employment began as a child laborer in the coal mining industry of Illinois. After long days of working in the coal mines, Cimera would return home to begin his daily practice sessions. His performing career centered around brass bands, wind bands and circus bands. Although his longest tenure was with Bohumir Kryl's band, his most acclaimed position was first chair trombonist and soloist with the Sousa band for one season. He never aspired to play in an orchestra as he considered the trombone section to be the "ass of the symphony!"[1] While the former part of his life was centered on performing, the latter focused on teaching. He taught primarily out of his home in Oak Park, Illinois, but also at Northwestern University for a brief time. Former students of his include Tommy Dorsey and Jack Jenny. While accomplished as a performer and instructor, Cimera also mixed and marketed his own slide oil, ran his own publishing business (Apollo Music Company), established a record label (Cimera Records) and even brewed beer during prohibition.

[1] Keig E. Garvin and André M. Smith,
"Jaroslav Čimera, 1885-1972: Virtuoso Trombonist—Master Teacher,
International Trombone Association Journal 25, no. 1 (January 1997): 41



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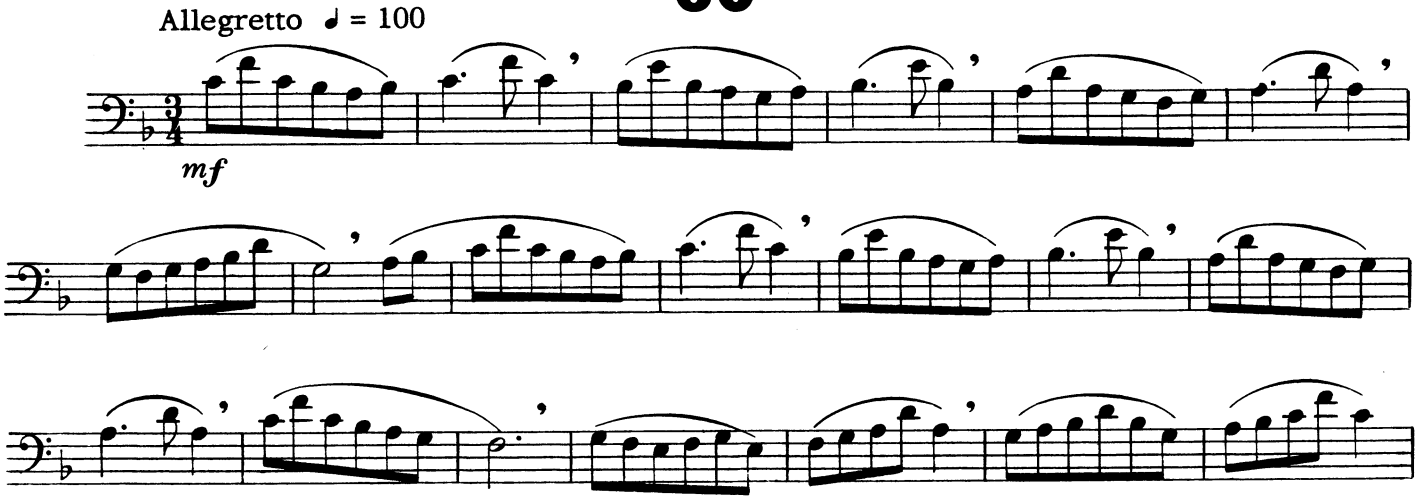
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