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RICHARD GEORG STRAUSS (1864–1949)

Strauss lived far into the twentieth century, but the works by which he is best known were almost all written in the shadow of the nineteenth century. His great tone poems were produced from 1888 to 1898, and his three most frequently-performed operas were composed by 1911. Moreover, in his late works he often looked back to the nineteenth century for inspiration, adding a kind of Mozartian grace and great personal warmth.

The son of the principal horn player in the Munich court orchestra, he began composing at 6, had a symphony performed by that orchestra when he was 16, and by the time he was 21 was being hailed as the successor to Brahms and Wagner. He began conducting at this time and developed into one of the finest conductors of his day.

One of the most fascinating aspects of his career is the way in which his relationship with the musical public changed over the years. In his early days he alternately shocked and thrilled audiences with his consummate handling of ever larger orchestral forces and his explorations of the limits of tonality, and when he turned his hand almost exclusively to opera, the same reactions were in evidence—but only for a time. Following the premiere in 1911 of his most popular opera, *Der Rosenkavalier*, he became looked on as a reactionary relic of the nineteenth century, and this opinion lasted until well after his death. Now, he is rightly considered one of the great exponents of Romanticism and Post-Romanticism, as well as a master of the symphonic poem.

Tod und Verklärung (Death and Transfiguration), Op. 24 (1889)

This tone poem dramatically depicts the final hours of the life of a man followed by his death and transfiguration in heaven.

The trombones are most active in the episode just before the transfiguration scene where an epic struggle between life and death is taking place.

The rhythm of an irregular heartbeat—Strauss called this the “death motive”—is heard after Rehearsal letter Q; play this with great vehemence and violence.

There are fragments of the transfiguration theme, such as five measures before Rehearsal letter U, before the trombones and timpani depict the moment of death two measures after Rehearsal letter X. Here we see visceral, powerful writing, and conductors may follow Strauss’s footnote in the score and ask for the trombone bells to be pointed upward to heighten the music’s intensity.

Q [*Allegro molto agitato* (♩ = ca. 160)]

R *ff* *3* *3* *ff* *3*

S *ff marc.* *3* *3* *3*

T *poco stringendo* *6* *7 a tempo calando* *sfz* *p*

Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98 (1885)

Brahms reserves the trombones for only the final movement of his Symphony No. 4. Described by musicologist Jan Swafford as filled with “a sense of relentless and mounting tragedy”^{*}, this movement is based on a chaconne (or passacaglia) theme taken from J. S. Bach’s Cantata BWV 150 (*Nach dir, Herr, verlanget mich*) and is repeated throughout with variations.

It is important to note that the three main sections of this movement shown in the excerpts below appear to be roughly similar in tempo. However, be prepared to play these excerpts in a wide range of tempos.

The eight-measure passacaglia theme—Bach’s original had only seven notes; the fifth note was added by Brahms—is introduced by the winds of the orchestra with the trombones adding a rich, somber character to the orchestration.

Do not play too loudly, but forebode what is to come. While composing this movement, Brahms wrote to his publisher, “I still think catastrophe is coming.”

The quarter-notes beginning in the ninth measure should have a visceral and sharp character that is incisive but not accented. Visualize the sharp blow of an ax into a tree.

1 **Allegro energico e passionato** (♩ = ca. 112)

The musical score consists of three staves: Trombone 1, Trombone 2, and Bass Trombone. The key signature is E minor (three sharps) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked 'Allegro energico e passionato' with a quarter note equal to approximately 112 beats per minute. The score begins with a forte (f) dynamic and includes a decrescendo (dim.) marking. A section marker 'A' is placed above measure 11. The score shows the first eleven measures of the piece, with the eighth measure being the start of the passacaglia theme.

^{*}Jan Swafford, *Johannes Brahms: A Biography* (New York: Vintage, 1999).

Christ lag in Todes Banden, BWV 4 (circa 1707)

J. S. Bach included trombones in over a dozen of his cantatas and motets. Today, early music ensembles often use sackbuts in music of this period; their narrow bore, flexible construction and small bells are ideal for blending with voices. When using a modern trombone, keep the style of your playing in context. Your role is to provide light, directional definition to the note pitches. Other bass instruments such as the bassoon, cello and string bass give more breadth to the sound.

In this excerpt, the bass trombone plays colla parte (with the voices), and the text is included to help assist in phrasing that must reflect the words. A soft quality to your tonguing and a gentle approach will result in a successful blend.

No. 2 Versus 1

Allegro (♩ = ca. 80)

Christ lag in To-des Ban-den, Christ lag in To-des Ban - den, Christ lag

To - des Ban - den, in To-des Ban - den, in To-des Ban-den für uns-re S^r

ben, für uns-re Sünd ge - ge - - - - - ben,

der er- stan - den, er ist wie - der er - stan - den, er ist

den, er ist wie - der er - stan - den, er - stan

hat uns bracht das Le - ben, das Le

ben, und hat uns brach'

Des wir s^r



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Symphonic Metamorphosis of Themes by Carl Maria von Weber (1943)

Movement 2 – Turandot, Scherzo

This passage is frequently asked for at auditions, particularly in a round with the entire low-brass section. Throughout, take care not to cut off or shorten notes before a breath, especially when you breathe after the second of two consecutive quarter-notes (such as four measures after Rehearsal letter H).

Hindemith's slurs are carefully marked so play them as written; do not add a slur where one is not indicated. The printed metronome marking is quite slow compared to the tempo of $\text{♩} = 80$ that is preferred by most conductors; practice this at a variety of tempos.

H [Moderato $\text{♩} = 132$]

I

J

K

L

M

N

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Variations on "America" (Ives, 1891, arr. Schuman, 1963)

Originally composed for organ, Ives' innovative variations on the patriotic song, "America," also known as "My Country 'Tis of Thee" and by the lyrics to which the tune was originally associated in the United Kingdom, "God Save the Queen/King," was arranged for orchestra by American composer William Schuman.

The passage at Rehearsal letter Q is in unison with the tuba and low strings. It requires clean articulation and fast slide technique.

At this brisk tempo, stay on top of the beat and do not let sixteenth-notes rush or the quarter-notes drag.

The metronome markings at Rehearsal letter R and five measures after Rehearsal letter S are by Schuman. Five measures after Rehearsal letter S, the tempo pulls back slightly, but now the sixteenth-notes are marcato with an accent on the first note of each group of four notes. It is best to work on this passage enough that you can play it in one breath.

Q **Meno mosso** (♩ = ca. 108)

ff *Trb. III and Tuba breathe at different places to produce unbroken, continuous line.*

R **Più mosso**
(Tempo I ♩ = ca. 126)

S **Mar**

poco rit.

ff

The image shows a musical score for the bass clef part of 'Variations on America'. It consists of four staves. The first staff is marked 'Q' and 'Meno mosso' with a tempo of ca. 108. It features a continuous line of notes with a 'ff' dynamic. A note below the staff reads 'Trb. III and Tuba breathe at different places to produce unbroken, continuous line.' The second staff is marked 'R' and 'Più mosso' with a tempo of ca. 126. It includes a triplet of notes marked 'Mar' (marcato). The third staff continues the melodic line. The fourth staff is marked 'poco rit.' and 'ff', showing a slight deceleration and a fortissimo dynamic.



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GUSTAV MAHLER (1860–1911)

In 1907, in the course of a visit to the Finnish master Jean Sibelius, Mahler said, "...a symphony must be like the world. It must embrace everything. To call it a symphony is really incorrect as it does not follow the usual form... to me, it means creating a world with all of the technical means available." *

Mahler's symphonies are among the most grandiose works ever written for the modern orchestra, and they deal with profound and all-encompassing subjects such as redemption through love, and an examination of spiritual matters which are often overlooked in daily living. The extraordinary power and appeal of his music comes, to a great extent, from his unique ability to combine everyday matters with sublime and spiritual ones, and in so doing to give unparalleled insights into the human condition.

Symphony No. 2 in C minor, *Resurrection* (1894)

Mahler's Symphony No. 2 is commonly known by its subtitle, "Resurrection," in reference to the composer's setting for chorus Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock's poem, *Die Auferstehung* (The Resurrection), in the fifth movement.

Four trombones are employed for this work; a bass trombone is always used for the fourth part and is sometimes used for the third trombone part. Among the editions of this symphony there are small and large differences. The excerpts in this publication conform to the most frequently performed editions.

Movement 5

The chorale at Rehearsal no. 10 begins with the trombones, tuba, and contrabassoon and is a somber variation of the *Dies irae*, the ancient chant for the Day of Judgment from the Mass.

This chorale is often performed more slowly than Mahler's indicated tempo of $\text{♩} = 60$.

Although Mahler clearly marked *marcato* in the first trombone line, most conductors play in a legato style.

Observe the breath mark at the end of measure 146; the first four measures are played in a somber and legato style. Beginning at Rehearsal no. 11, the music becomes triumphant and with no harshness to your attacks.

This excerpt appears on the following pages.



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* Michael

Movement 3

Mahler's scherzo is full of unexpected rhythmic surprises. In this excerpt for the three unison trombones, the two eighth-notes appear on various beats within each measure, and must fit into the continuous eighth-notes being played in other parts.

Usually conducted with one beat to the measure, practice this with a metronome so you do not fall behind at any point. Be careful not to hold the last note of measures 263 and 268 longer than marked.

252 **9** [Tempo I - Kräftig, nicht zu schnell] (♩ = ca. 60)
 Tromp. I u II in B.

261 *drängend*

Here again, the fast tempo requires you to stay on top of the beat. Do not engage in hard tonguing as you change the dynamics quickly and articulate the staccato notes clearly.

NB: The notation in measures 469-471 and measure 481 does not appear in all editions.

463 [Tempo I] (♩ = ca. 60)
 Nicht schleppen

471

487 **17**

628 **24** Wieder zum Tempo zurückkehrend

635 **3** Wuchtig

647 **25** Vorwärt

654

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Scheherazade, Op. 35 (1888)

Movement 1 – The Sea and Sinbad’s Ship

In the opening measure, the trombones and tuba state the stern theme of the Sultan Schahriar.

Play this passage very tenuto and with a full, warm sound.

1 **Largo e maestoso** $\text{♩} = 48$

ff G.P. 1 G.P.

Here at measure 114, the bass trombone and tuba play the opening theme in octaves and along with the cellos and basses.

114 **[Allegro non troppo]** $\text{♩} = 56$

f **E**

118 *mf* *ff*

At measure 193, the bass trombone and tuba again play the opening theme. Conductors r back slightly in measure 198.

193 **[Allegro non troppo]** $\text{♩} = 56$

[ff]

198

mf

Movement 2 – The Tale of the Kalander Prince

Following a dramatic fanfare for second trumpet at measure 132 but in a faster tempo. Conductors tempo; this may require triple-tonguing.

132 **[Tempo giusto, Allegro]**

f *risoluto*

142

f 2



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