

## PREFACE

The alto trombone has an illustrious history. In past centuries it was as popular and as widely used as the tenor and bass trombones. Some of the finest solo writing for the trombone during the 17th and 18th centuries was actually for the alto member of the family, not the currently more popular tenor and bass. By the beginning of the 20th century however, the alto trombone had become practically obsolete, its place being taken by the versatile tenor.

Despite the fact that a few 20th century composers have used the alto trombone in major orchestral and operatic works, the instrument has remained virtually unused by the majority of modern trombonists until recently. Now there is a renewed interest in the alto trombone and therefore, there is a need for a method book specifically designed to help the performer overcome the problems encountered with the instrument. It is towards this end that this book is written.

Stephen C. Anderson

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this volume is to provide material for study on the E-flat alto trombone. The material has been organized systematically and becomes progressively more difficult. There is no discussion of embouchure, breathing, tonguing, or any of the other rudiments of performance. The only comment to be made is that you must learn to play in tune. Regardless of the process you choose, it is imperative that your intonation be correct. Listen, hear, relax, and enjoy.

### Learning to Play the Alto Trombone

This book for learning to play the alto trombone actually contains several methods. You are free to choose any one method, any combination, or to do them all. It is important, however, that you feel comfortable doing whatever you choose.

### METHOD NO. 1

When you look through the book you will notice that all of the pages on the left are written in bass clef. This is done in order to treat the alto trombone as a transposing instrument. In other words, the performer plays the written pitch and the instrument sounds a different pitch. This is a process which is standard for the trumpets, clarinets, horns, saxes, and other transposing instruments. However, it is a bit unfamiliar to most trombonists.

Using this method, simply play the instrument as though you are playing a B-flat tenor trombone. When you play a written B-flat however, it will sound the E-flat a perfect fourth above. As you play the written pitches on the left-hand pages, the instrument will sound the pitches written in the alto clef on the right-hand pages. This may seem odd at first, but stay with it and go slowly to be certain that you have started on the correct pitch. As you progress it will become easy.

In the beginning, or throughout if you wish, another person playing a tenor trombone can play the pages on the right in alto clef. You will be playing in unison. This will help assure that you have started on the correct pitch and are playing in tune.

For those who choose this method there is an obvious drawback. The available literature is not written down a fourth. It is found only at sounding pitch. This means that it will be necessary for you to write out those pieces that you want to play using this method, with three major exceptions. Transposed editions of the concertos for alto trombone by Albrechtsberger, Wagenseil, and Leopold Mozart are included in this volume. The piano and orchestral parts have not been included. It will be necessary for you to purchase them separately. All are readily available. The editions found in this book can be used when treating the alto trombone as a transposing instrument. They will sound at the correct pitch.

## METHOD NO. 2

If you wish to learn to play in the alto clef at the written pitch, treating the horn as a non-transposing instrument, you should read the right-hand pages only. The material is identical to that found on the left-hand pages. It begins simply in the home key of E-flat and gets progressively more difficult.

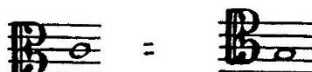
The greatest obstacle to overcome in using this method is that you must relearn the positions for all the notes. It is very important to go slowly at first in order to train yourself to play all the notes correctly. It is very important that you discipline yourself to play the technical exercises to perfection. You will encounter these patterns often in performance.

The next greatest obstacle to overcome is intonation. Even when you go to what you believe to be the correct position, tuning can be a problem. Listen and adjust. It is vitally important to play in tune.

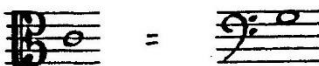
## METHOD NO. 3

The third method uses the process of interval transposition. This is a technique often used by performers on the horn and trumpet, but rarely by trombonists. In utilizing this process, the player is actually treating the instrument as a transposing instrument just as in Method No. 1. Instead of physically writing the music down a fourth though, the player visualizes the written notes in a different position on the staff and then plays them accordingly. Here are three transposition possibilities.

1. The player visualizes the note that is written in alto clef down one step and in tenor clef.



2. The player visualizes the note that is written in alto clef up a fourth and in bass clef.



3. The player visualizes the note that is written in alto clef down a third and in treble clef. You must then lower this note an octave.



In each of these transpositions the player has visualized a note that is a perfect fourth lower than the written pitch. You then play that note as in Method No. 1 and the instrument will sound the correct pitch.

### THE EXERCISES

The warmup materials in this book are derived either completely or in part from the warmup studies of Emory Remington. The so-called warmup process is very important, not only in the preparation to play each day, but also in the overall process of familiarizing oneself with the instrument and developing correct performance techniques. The Remington Warm-up Studies prepared and edited by Donald Hunsberger and published by Accura Music is an excellent annotated collection of the Remington studies. Although originally developed for the tenor and bass trombones, they are easily adaptable to the alto instrument.

The technical studies are derived from the many exercises developed by Arban, Mueller, and Kopprasch. They have been transposed, edited, and otherwise adapted for use with the alto trombone. It is important to practice all the articulation variations listed for these exercises. They will be encountered frequently in the performance of music from the Baroque and Classical periods. The melodic etudes in this volume are either newly composed or drawn from folk melodies and vocal study material. It is recommended that the performer seek other technical and melodic materials from the standard sources upon completion of this book.

### CONCLUSION

There is no single way to learn to play the alto trombone. Each method has its advantages and disadvantages. Some are much easier and more readily successful than others. Regardless of the method you choose, you will encounter difficulties because the alto trombone is different from the tenor and bass instruments. It needs less air, its resistance is greater, its response is different, and the distance between positions is significantly less. It takes time and practice to become accustomed to these differences. Be patient and strive for perfection.

# Warmups & Scales

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.



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# Warmups & Scales

1. 





*Legato Tongue*

2. 





3. 







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57. *Moderato* *Brahms*  
*mf*

58. *Andante* *American*  
*f* *p* *mf*

*rit.* *a tempo* *f* *rit.*

59. *Allegro*  
*f*

60. *Moderato*  
*mf*

61. *Slow (in 4)*  
*mp*

*p*

62. *Slow.*



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Moderato Brahms

57. *mf*

Moderato American

58. *f* *p* *mf*

*a tempo*

*rit.* *f*

Allegro

59. *f*

Moderato

60. *mf*

Slow (in 4)

61. *mp*

Slr

62. *mf*



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