

Introduction

This is not a beginning trumpet book. Though the exercises in the following fourteen studies never ascend beyond the top line of the treble staff, they are designed for college students and professional players who wish to:

- ★ Develop skill on E⁷ or piccolo trumpet apart from the canon of solo and orchestral repertoire;
- ★ Perfect the low register of the B⁷ trumpet, including use of the third valve; or
- ★ Improve technically while in the midst of an embouchure change, braces, or other situation that makes the high register prohibitive.

I first recognized the need for this book when I met a college student who, seemingly as the result of a medical procedure gone wrong, proved to be incapable of playing any note above a fourth-space E. Having studied for several years, he possessed a thorough understanding of scales and keys, basic fundamentals and articulation patterns. However, his musical growth was hindered not only by his physical limitations but also by the lack of repertoire that would adequately challenge his technical abilities without also becoming musically stale. (One wants to play only so many Clarke studies per day.) As I began to write pieces for his lessons, I began to see the broader implications for my own playing—particularly on auxiliary trumpets.

The studies in this book will make demands on the performer in nearly every area other than the upper register—soft, rapid double- or triple-tonguing; wide slurs; infrequently-used keys; multiple tonguing in the low register; unusual tonalities; facility with the third (and fourth) valve; extended phrases. In some cases, these demands may seem extreme or even unrealistic; however, sincere practice over these passages will almost certainly improve the player's overall technique, and may make more standard repertoire seem easier by comparison. Above all, these etudes are intended to be performed; whether in lessons or in front of an audience, players should always strive for musical expression and dramatic presentation.

These studies are ordered according to their level of difficulty for a player on an B-flat trumpet. However, because the E-flat and piccolo trumpets present different challenges, separate “tracks” for these two instruments appear at the top of each page.

It is my hope that these studies will prove to be engaging, challenging, and musically gratifying. My sincere thanks go out to all of the students who squinted through the early drafts of this collection in order to facilitate its completion. May they and others find that the barriers that seem to exist on the trumpet are not so insurmountable after all.

A Word About Alternate Fingerings & the Piccolo Trumpet

The trumpet is not built to play readily in tune; its combinatory valve system along with the pitch tendencies inherent in the natural overtone series have resulted in an instrument that demands a certain amount of adjustment by the player. In large trumpets, these adjustments are effected first and foremost by extending the first and third slides for certain notes. However, most modern piccolos do not come equipped with these slides—nor is it practical, in many cases, to add and use them. On the other hand, most modern piccolos do come equipped with a fourth valve—which, of course, connects to the fourth valve slide. This slide is approximately equal to the combined lengths of slides 1 and 3 and opens up a wide range of possibilities for alternate fingerings.

I have heard the argument that alternate fingerings are too cumbersome to be of use as a regular means of adjusting the pitch on piccolo trumpet. I personally feel that the tradeoffs—which include an even sound throughout the range of the instrument, the ability to adjust in the moment according to the pitch of the ensemble, facility with all twelve keys, and better blend with other musicians—are worth the effort. At a minimum, I recommend that players using this book experiment with third valve for all E's and A's; fourth valve for low D; and combined second and fourth valve for low C[#]/D^b.^{*} The goal is not to replace the standard fingerings with the alternates, but to gain equal facility with both options so as to free the player to make a choice based on musical context, as opposed to personal limitations.

^{*} Players should also experiment with how they operate the fourth valve. Some use the left index finger whereas others use the right pinky. My own choices depend primarily on context. I have also at times shifted the right hand so as to place the right ring finger above the fourth valve, but this technique works only in very special circumstances.