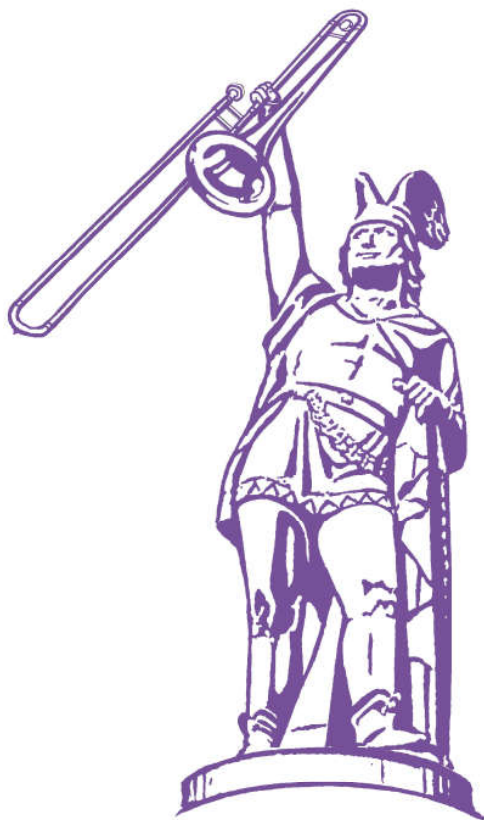


Charles “Charlie” Small

Sliding & Stringing Along

A Playful Piece for Violin & Bass Trombone



Kagarice Brass Editions
a division of Ensemble Publications

Sliding and Stringing Along

a playful piece for violin and tenor trombone
Charles Small (2015)

Notes on this edition by Douglas Yeo and Ronald Barron

Born in New York City in 1927, trombonist Charles “Charlie” Small (his name at birth was Charles Srulowitz) joined the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra in 1944 at the age of 17. Much of his playing career was based in New York City—his many years in New York bookended a short period of time in the 1970s when he moved to Los Angeles—where he was an active freelance player. He moved to Scottsdale, Arizona, in 1987 where he continued to perform, led trombone ensembles, and supported area trombonists by his attendance at recitals and concerts at Arizona State University and other venues. Charlie’s death in 2017 at the age of 90 was mourned by many who had experienced his superb playing, his tireless love of the trombone, and the many memorable, happy interactions with players of all ages.

In addition to his long career as a player, Charlie was a prolific composer. While he is well known to trombonists for his duet for tenor and bass trombones, *Conversation* (Ensemble Publications, KEO03), Charlie also wrote many jazz duets for trombones (some of which were featured on the Music Minus One recording, *Little Jazz Duets*), and a companion duet to *Conversation*, *The Significant Other*, the first part of which (1991) is published by Williams Music and the second part (1994) remains in Charlie’s manuscript. Among his last works was a duet for violin and trombone or bass trombone, *Sliding and Stringing Along*, written in 2015. This duet was inspired by Charlie’s daughter, Jennifer, who played violin and died on June 15, 2015. “When I think of the piece,” Charlie told Ronald Barron, “my thoughts of Jennifer bring tears to my eyes.”

In 2015, Charlie gave a copy of *Sliding and Stringing Along* to Douglas Yeo (retired bass trombonist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and, at that time, Professor of Trombone at Arizona State University), and a copy to Ronald Barron (retired principal trombonist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra). Both players had long friendships with Charlie. Ron and Doug made the first commercially available recording of *Conversation* which was simultaneously released in 1996 on Ron’s recording *In The Family* (Boston Brass BB1004) and Doug’s recording *Proclamation* (Die letzte Posaune 055). In November 2016, Charlie and Doug collaborated to create a new edition of *Conversation* for publication.

Sliding and Stringing Along came to Ron in Charlie’s typically messy manuscript, with parts for violin and tenor trombone along with a score. Doug received a similar set in Charlie’s handwriting, but the trombone part was scored for bass trombone. Each violin part was slightly different, and each score was slightly different. We have no idea which of us received the piece first, and nor do we know which version—for tenor or bass trombone—Charlie penned first. Ron and violinist Ron Gorevic premiered *Sliding and Stringing Along* in a recital at Bard College at Simon’s Rock, Massachusetts, on November 1, 2015. On March 13, 2016, they played the piece again as part of Ron’s annual recital at Richmond (Massachusetts) Congregational Church and Charlie was in attendance at the concert.

After Charlie’s death, we wanted to honor him by preparing a performing edition of *Sliding and Stringing Along* for publication. This we did with

the enthusiastic permission of Charlie's wife, Emily, and son, David. But once we got going on this project, we ran into some bumps along the way. Charlie was famously casual about his music once it was in a player's hands. "It sounded great!" was his usual comment when he heard a performance, always delivered with a smile. Like Alec Wilder, Charlie's manuscripts were—to be polite about it—rather messy. He didn't bother with consistently applying articulations, dynamics, and other editorial markings throughout his music. We put together our six handwritten sources—two violin parts, a tenor trombone and a bass trombone part, and two scores—and set about reconciling the many differences. Some decisions were arrived at easily, using the theological construct of "good and necessary consequence" by—when it seemed to make sense—applying an articulation on a particular musical figure to other figures of the same kind where Charlie seemed to have forgotten to write simile or didn't bother to write out the articulation in a repeated instance. More difficult to untangle were places where Charlie wrote different notes in different sources at the same point in the piece. If he clearly wrote B-natural in the tenor trombone part but a B-flat in the bass trombone part, which was right? One? The other? Or was Charlie just playing around with us, giving us the freedom to do either? On one occasion in the violin part (measures 96 and 97), Charlie wrote two completely different passages, each of which works equally well, and each of which makes per-

fect sense. We wish we could sit down with him and sort everything out but, unfortunately, that is not possible. That said, even when we did ask a Charlie a question about the piece, such as when Doug asked Charlie how he was supposed to manage the last bass trombone notes of the piece—three low Cs while using a plunger—Charlie smiled and, with a dismissive wave of his hand said, "You figure it out!" If we were able to talk to him right now, we have a feeling that he might sometimes say, as he did when he and Doug were working on the new edition of *Conversation*, "What do you think sounds best?" That was Charlie. He never really seemed satisfied with his music, but he also trusted performers to make decisions and bring his pieces to life.

This edition—two editions, really: one for tenor trombone and the other for bass trombone—represents our best efforts to put into print parts that both honor what we believe are Charlie's intentions for the *Sliding and Stringing Along*, and that we believe would please him. After months of working on this, we came to the point where we finally said, in the words of J. S. Bach's *Cantata BWV 60, Es ist genug*—It is enough. We've done what we can. While we are saddened that Charlie is no longer with us to hear performances of this charming piece, we hope others will enjoy this duet written by a father who, he admitted, was thinking about his precious daughter at the time of its composition.

Douglas Yeo and Ronald Barron
January 2021

In Memoriam - Jennifer Small

Sliding & Stringing Along

A Playful Piece for Violin & Bass Trombone

Charles "Charlie" Small (1927-2017)

Edited by Ronald Barron & Douglas Yeo

Freely, out of tempo

Violin

Bass Trombone

plunger

mf

ad lib. [with plunger]

4

ad lib.

ad lib.

7

♩ = 77

A

11

ad lib. [with plunger]

* An edition for tenor trombone
is also available, see item KT026.

Catalog No: KT026

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**DO NOT COPY
OR SHARE ELECTRONICALLY**

16

p 3 3

20

3 3

to open

24

p *p*

28

32

Sample Score

Charlie Small
Sliding & Stringing Along

violin & bass trombone

Catalog No: KB015

Also available for violin & tenor trombone,
see item KT026

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53

6

6

put down plunger

Tempo I (♩=77)

56

60

65

D

70

rit.

E ♩=74

3

3

Sample Score

Charlie Small
Sliding & Stringing Along

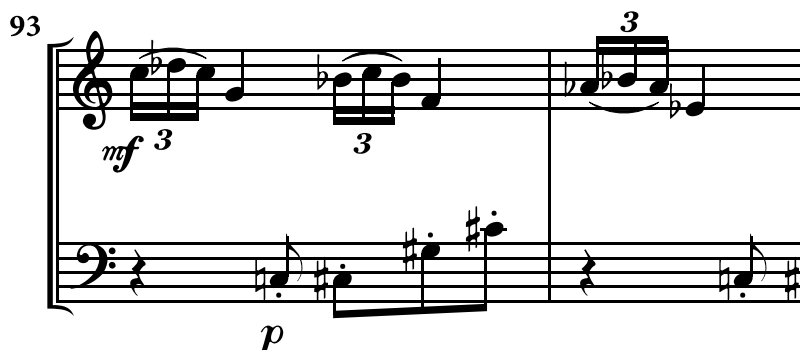
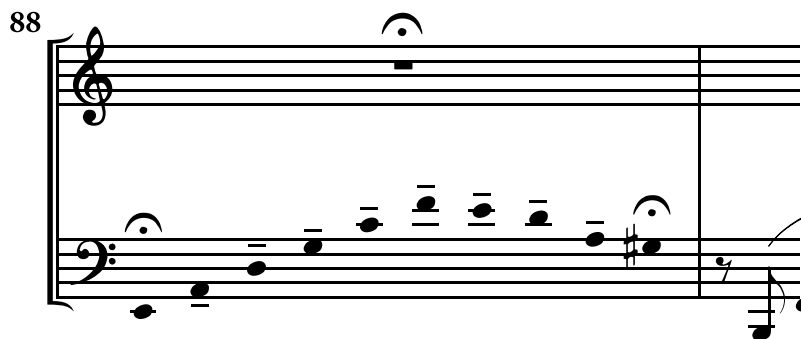
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