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20 PIECES IN CHANGING METER ***for trombone***

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20 Pieces in Changing Meters: A Review **Donn Schaefer**

Davies, Kenneth W. *20 Pieces in Changing Meters for Unaccompanied Trombone*. Puna Music Company, 1999. 32 pages.

I remember my first exposure to mixed meter almost as much as the first time I laid eyes on tenor clef. The resulting cacophony during an otherwise civil rehearsal did little to impress the conductor. Like myself, many trombone players first encounter changing meters in compositions written for band. Standard etude books usually stick to one meter in each etude, leaving teachers with a lack of lesson material that can be used to teach the skills needed to negotiate changing time signatures. Fortunately for trombonists, Kenneth W. Davies has written an etude book that focuses on changing meters.

20 Pieces in Changing Meters for Unaccompanied Trombone is a collection of etudes written for students in the 11th-12th grades or first year of college. The music is laid out in an easy to read format and covers a wide range of dynamics, tempi and meters. Each etude has it's own distinct style. One includes a passage from "Ride of the Valkyries," one borrows themes from Hindemith's Sonata for Trombone, and another is based on Dave Brubeck's "Take Five." The etudes are musical and enjoyable to work on.

20 Pieces includes pentatonic, atonal, serial, and whole-tone etudes, as well as pieces based on fourths, thirds or chromatic scales. A notable feature of this book is that none of the etudes have key signatures. As the author states, this is due to the atonal nature or rapidly changing key centers in each etude. Whatever method of composition a given etude is based on, there is always a strong sense of musical logic and phrasing. Davies gives the player plenty of musical challenges in addition to focusing on mixed meter.

Etudes range from pedal B-flat (only appearing once) to B-flat an octave above middle C. All of the music is written in bass clef. Most of the music is in the staff or above; use of an F attachment is not required on any of the etudes. None of the etudes stay in one register for too long, making this a good book for players who are just starting to develop their upper registers.

I have begun using 20 Pieces in Changing Meters with my college level trombone students. The etudes work well with freshmen and sophomores, and may be used as sight reading material for more advanced students. Members of

my low brass studio have found these etudes a welcome addition to the standard fare of Bordogni and Blazhevich.

Kenneth W. Davies has given us an exciting new etude book. I would encourage trombone teachers to add this to their arsenal of teaching materials. If Davies expands this book in the future, the inclusion of a few etudes with key signatures would be beneficial. As it stands, this is a valuable addition to the pedagogical materials available for trombone.

Donn Schaefer is originally from Vancouver, Canada. He joined the music faculty of the University of Mississippi in 2000 where he directs the top jazz ensemble "The Mississippians," teaches trombone and performs with the faculty brass quintet. Schaefer maintains an active freelance schedule in the Memphis area.

intended for the private trombone student at the 11th-12th grade High School level, although they can also be useful as remedial or preparatory "pre-Bitsch" material at the first year college level. Range, technique and rhythmic complexity have been minimized in order to avoid creating too many things for the student to focus on at once. For most students at this level, meter changes and interval structures within a non-tonal context are enough. Technique and range are more than adequately covered in other methods and studies.

To The Student: Always remember that the goal is not only to count beats accurately, but to also *feel the meter*. Keep in mind that all meter signatures, no matter how complex they may look, are ultimately made up of sub-groups of 2-beat patterns and 3-beat patterns. Remembering this principle will guide you in figuring out any meter signature and determining how the beat flow should feel.

About Ken Davies

A Wisconsin native.
 Attended U. of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
 B.Mus (U. of Wisconsin-Madison)
 Attended Yale School of Music
 M.A. (Middle Tennessee State Univ.)
 M.M. (U. of Colorado-Boulder)

Trombone teachers have included Paul Wallace, Robert Gutter, John Swallow, David Loucky and William Stanley. Professional performance experience in all forms includes 10 years (1972-82) with Nick Russo & Gabriel's Brass at Walt Disney World, Florida. While in Orlando, he also taught privately hundreds of brass students at all levels and also acquired credits as a composer-arranger-producer for records

Focus on maintaining the feel of 3s, the underlying pulse that moves from beat to beat. But at the same time, balance these 3-beat pulses with the larger sense of meter shown by the signatures. Remember to shift your mental gears when the meter changes (2-beat measures feel different than 3-beat measures). The "completing" 15th note of measure 19 is simply a 3-beat measure (3X3).

20 Pieces in Changing Meters for Trombone

This exercise features "decreasing steps" such as is found in Latin music like the Ostinato Nacional. A good way to help internalize the metric feel (while giving your embouchure a rest) is to set a metronome to the eighth-note and tap the metric accents (see the first two measures). It also is a nice warm-up exercise!

20 Pieces in Changing Meters for Trombone

A soft, lyrical melody built on a pentatonic (5-note) scale. The slowly moving eighth-note beat will give you time to keep track of your slurs.

20 Pieces in Changing Meters for Trombone

Swing the notes (with a little in that "jazzy" place).

and TV.

Since 2002, he has resided in south Mississippi where he teaches brass, composes, and runs his publishing company, Kenvad Music. His works include acoustic and electronic pieces that have been performed nationally at Society of Composers national and regional conferences, Southeastern Composers League, the International Trombone Festival, Electronic Music Midwest, Electroacoustic Bardsdance, and various concerts. Honors include ASCAP awards and grants from National Endowment for the Arts and Mississippi Arts Commission, including the 2006-2007 Mississippi Performing Artist Fellowship in Composition. In March 2009, his work, *Three Pieces for Bass Trombone and Piano*, won the Eastern Trombone Workshop National Trombone Composition Competition.

12 **20 Pieces in Changing Meters for Trombone**

Practice this slowly, at first, in order to secure intonation and precise phrasing on the chromatic runs.

Lento $\text{♩} = 60$ Ken Davies

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12 **20 Pieces in Changing Meters for Trombone**

Double and triple tonguing gets a somewhat easy. The up-stroke measures 21 is simply a glissando-like by dragging the slide. Aim for the natural (see 5th position in C) and let the "in-between notes" be pulled up using the key.

Allegro $\text{♩} = 60$ Ken Davies

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The piece makes prominent use of 2nd-species Perfect 4th intervals in its melodic line. Note also the ascending pattern of the 5th position of measure 8. From the ascending pattern you can see that the notes are written out on the flat and side of the slide bar.

Moderato $\text{♩} = 60$ Ken Davies

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