



ken davies

**20 Pieces
in
Changing
Meters**

for unaccompanied trombone

KD 131

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To the student:

From the beginning of the 20th century, frequent changes of meter have been a prominent feature of a great many art music works. Changes of time signature appear in some popular music as well. The purpose of this book is to provide practice material covering a wide variety of meter signatures (time signatures) in various changing contexts.

Always remember that the goal is not only to count beats accurately, but also to feel the meter. A sense of rhythm often, if not always, depends on the feel of the meter. You will quickly discover that you must become accustomed to "shifting your mental gears" before each change of meter you encounter in order to be ready to feel the new meter. This mental shifting is an important part of your practice. As with other things you have learned, this too will become second nature after several weeks.

Keep in mind that every meter signature, no matter how complex it may seem, is ultimately made up of sub-groups of 2-beat patterns and/or 3-beat patterns. Remembering this principle will guide you in figuring out any meter signature and determining how the beat flow should feel.

This book is not only about meter changes. Many musical works of the 20th century also use different forms of melodic and harmonic structures than are commonly found in much popular music, jazz and works of the 17th through 19th centuries. For that reason, none of these etudes have key signatures. This is because either the sense of a key changes very frequently or there is no sense of key intended at all in the traditional sense. Instead of a key signature, you will see an extensive use of accidentals. You will find yourself learning to hear intervals (distances between pitches). Above all, remember that this is music and therefore phrases and melodic "statements" will be valid and meaningful, just as they are in other musical styles.

To the Teacher:

These etudes are intended for the private trombone student at the 11th-12th grade level, though they can also be useful as remedial or preparatory 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.

The non-trombone playing teacher should be acutely aware that precise intonation depends heavily on precise slide positions. In addition to the seven positions, there are numerous instances where the precise position is raised or lowered from the position shown on many traditional position charts. The position chart in this book shows many pitches as offset from the "position mark" in order to indicate their relative placement. The final determinant is, of course, by ear. Where there is some lip adjustment for certain notes on other brass instruments, this need not and should not be the case with trombone. Rather, it is important that the student blow freely and adjust pitch only with the slide. The effort you make in ensuring that the student memorizes and internalizes these "more than seven" positions will also result in a cross-over of better technique development in other areas.

These etudes are intended, first and foremost, as music rather than "merely exercises." I am pleased that some of these pieces have been used in public performance both individually and in sets the way pianists often perform sets of Chopin etudes.

Ken Davies
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Study the slide position chart for intonation as you work on this piece. Notice how several of the note patterns are on the same slide position but a slight raising or lowering of the slide makes the difference for precise intonation. This is a good lip slur warm up piece.

Andante $\text{♩} = 69$

Ken Davies

1

5

9

8.

The half-note is the beat unit throughout this modal flavored piece. Be sure to make a distinction between normally tongued and legato tongued notes. Hold the double whole-notes a full four beats at measures 17 and 21.

Adagio $\text{♩} = 76$

Ken Davies

2

5

9.

Focus on maintaining the feel of 3s, the underlying triplets that move from beat to beat. But at the same time, balance those beat-triplets 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 "complex-looking" 15/8 meter at measure 19 (abbr. m. 19) is simply a 5-beat measure (5X3).

Adagio $\text{♩} = 56$

Ken Davies

3

6

10.

This etude features "alternating sixes" such as is found in Latin music like the Mexican Mariachi. 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). Be alert to a few metric surprises!

Presto ♩ = 208

Ken Davies

4

mf

6

9

p

13

f

A soft, lyrical melody built on a pentatonic (5-tone) scale. The slowly moving eighth-note beat will give you time to keep track of your sharps. Repeat enough to become comfortable with these sharps.

Adagio cantabile ♩ = 66

Ken Davies

7

p

5

14.

Swing the notes just a little in this "jazz five" piece. Be sure to utilize sharp 5th position on the B-flats / A-sharps where indicated.

Moderately, Lightly ♩ = 108

Ken Davies

8

mp

9

18.

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

Lento $\text{♩} = 80$

Ken Davies

10

6

10

pp

p *mp* *mf*

f

21.

Observe dynamics carefully. Several aspects of this piece pay tribute to 20th century composer Paul Hindemith who composed many fine works which feature trombone.

The notes $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$ at measure 27 means that the duration of the preceding half-note is equal to the duration of the upcoming dotted half-note. In this case, **the beat (tempo) remains the same but the metric feel changes from duple to triple**. Remember to "shift your mental gears." Note the reverse at m. 35.

Langsam, breit $\text{♩} = 66$

Ken Davies

13

5

p *mp* *mf*

25.

This piece makes prominent use of **successive Perfect 4th intervals** in its melodies. Note also the **beaming pattern of the 5/8 section** at m. 8. From the beaming pattern you can see that the metric accents fall on the 1st and 3rd of the five beats.

Maestoso $\text{♩} = 60$

Ken Davies

16

4

8

f *mp* *mf*

20 Pieces in Changing Meters for unaccompanied trombone

- range E2 to Bb 4 (there is one pedal Bb)
- for upper high school through first year college
- for tenor trombone - no F-attachment needed
- nearly all time signatures
- non-"key" (no key signatures, all accidentals)
- bass clef
- 32 pages

The objective of this book is to provide musical practice material covering a wide variety of meter signatures in various changing contexts.

"Musically excellent and technically sound."

...Buddy Baker, Professor of Trombone (Emeritus), University of Northern Colorado

"I use and greatly admire this book."

...Tom Ervin, Professor of Trombone, University of Arizona

"This book stands alone in its departure from overplayed etudes and vocalizes to a progressive trombone study of new and original music."

...Pete Vriesenga, bass trombone, Boulder Philharmonic

"These concert études were carefully thought out by an experienced trombonist/composer/teacher. They introduce the common challenges of modern music in a systematic way. Unlike some books focusing on contemporary techniques, which can overwhelm and demoralize a young player, Davies presents new skills individually and selectively. While the book is aimed at 11-12th graders, many college trombone majors, especially those with inadequate meter and rhythm skills, can benefit from it as well. Each etude introduces only one new trombone technique. For example, #1 deals with intonation in lip slurs through exact slide placement. There are etudes with melodies based on less common scales such as whole tone, pentatonic, chromatic and diminished. Others make use of specific intervals such as the tritone and perfect fourth. There is also an etude in jazz style, reminiscent of Dave Brubeck's *Take Five*. Range, technique and rhythmic complexity have been minimized in order to focus on one problem at a time. Once a student is comfortable with the meter changes and interval structures, he can easily move on to materials that present more challenges in technique and range. Davies features useful pedagogical advice prior to each etude and suggests follow-up study in specified areas. For instance, after his jazz styled etude, he lists several jazz trombonists worthy of listening study. He also provides a short list of classical trombonists whose recordings are easy to acquire, as well as standard classical compositions that feature prominent trombone parts. These are welcome aids that help young players become aware of what is available. "

... David Loucky, Professor of Trombone, Middle Tennessee State University

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. (Note: Published by Kenvad Music since 2011)

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, Ken 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 its 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.