

THE TRUMPET CONCERTOS OF ANTHONY PLOG: A PERFORMER'S GUIDE

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By

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Over the past twenty-five years, Anthony Plog (b. 1947) has become increasingly recognized as a composer of eminence. He has been awarded numerous commissions and grants, including a commission from the National Endowment for the Arts. Many of his works for brass instruments have become required pieces for international brass competitions.¹ Though primarily known as a composer of brass music, Plog has composed in other genres that include orchestral music, opera, and wind band.

The music of this former trumpeter-turned-composer is “characterized by [its] originality and rare expressive dimension.”² Typically, his works are dominated by chromaticism and rhythmic complexity, and place significant physical demands on the performer. Though his music is difficult, it also conveys intense emotions. His music for trumpet, specifically his two trumpet concertos, represents a zenith in his compositional development and is the focus of this project.

¹ Randy Grabowski, “Trumpeter Turned Composer: An Interview with Anthony Plog,” *International Trumpet Guild Journal* 27 (March 2003): 44 – 51; see p. 44.

² Anthony Plog, *Concerto no. 2 for Trumpet and Orchestra* (Switzerland: Editions BIM, 1994).

Plog's Concerto no. 1 for Trumpet, Brass Ensemble and Percussion (1988) exhibits stylistic traits characteristic of his compositional output. The concerto, written early in Plog's compositional career, is a technical showpiece for trumpet³ that requires the performer to exhibit a high degree of technical facility. The piece is rhythmically oriented with only a small portion of lyricism. The concerto features the open harmonic series and is placed in a high tessitura that demands great physical control by the performer.

Concerto no. 2 for Trumpet and Orchestra (1994) follows many of the technical characteristics of Concerto no. 1 but it goes beyond the technical to encompass a deeply expressive dimension.⁴ For Concerto no. 2, Plog broadened his compositional horizons, composing "a piece that was deep and meaningful,"⁵ "not just another trumpet jock piece."⁶ The concerto is tonal, very melodic, and contains extra-musical connotations of life and death in the second movement that reveal intense emotions rarely found in a trumpet concerto.

Statement of Purpose

At present, there is a lack of information about Plog's music other than the occasional music review that appears in the various instrument journals (i.e. *International Trumpet Guild*, *International Trombone Forum*, *The Horn Call*, etc.). This dissertation examines Concerto no. 1 and Concerto no. 2 from a performer's

³ Anthony Plog, E-mail Interview conducted by the author, 16 April 2011.

⁴ Ibid, 14 December 2010.

⁵ Ibid, 27 November 2008.

⁶ Ibid, 6 December 2008.

perspective to better understand the stylistic characteristics and challenges encountered in his music.

State of Research

There is little published material about Concerto no. 1. The information available include the CD liner notes from the three commercially released recordings and a dissertation published in 2010, *A Performer's Guide to the Preparation of Anthony Plog's Concerto no. 1 for Solo Trumpet, Brass Ensemble, and Percussion*. The author of the dissertation, Jacob Walburn, outlines the various challenges and style traits presented in the concerto. The author also provides useful strategies to assist the performer in preparing the concerto for performance.

Bret Jackson reviewed Concerto no. 1 for the *International Trumpet Guild Journal*, focusing on the contour of the solo trumpet melody and the complex rhythms of the accompanying brass ensemble, which “requires virtuoso players.”⁷

Compared to Concerto no. 1, there is significantly more literature available about Concerto no. 2. Nick Norton, who premiered the concerto in February 1997, offered the first important information about Concerto no. 2 at the 1997 International Trumpet Guild Conference in Sweden. There Norton presented a lecture on the concerto “to introduce the work to trumpet players.”⁸ In his

⁷ Bret Jackson, “Concerto for Solo Trumpet, 14-Part Brass Ensemble and Percussion, Editions BIM, 1988,” *International Trumpet Guild* 19 (December 1994): 70.

⁸ Nick Norton, *International Trumpet Guild Annual Conference*, Göteborg, Sweden, home video made available courtesy of Nick Norton, June 1997.

presentation, Norton identified the numerous themes, figures and chord structures evident in the concerto's four movements.

Equally important to Norton's presentation is a review of the concerto written by Randy Grabowski, professor of trumpet at the University of Northern Iowa, for *The International Trumpet Guild Journal*. Similar to Norton's presentation, Grabowski presents an overview of the thematic and motivic elements of the concerto. He briefly discusses the technical virtuosity and performance demands of the concerto, mentioning that "[the work] seems to transcend traditional compositional guidelines for the instrument in expressiveness and originality."⁹

⁹ Randy Grabowski, "Concerto No. 2: Trumpet and Orchestra (piano reduction), Editions BIM, 1996," *International Trumpet Guild* 25 (October 2000): 76.

CHAPTER 2

ANTHONY PLOG: PERFORMER, TEACHER, AND COMPOSER

Anthony Plog has led a varied and extensive career that covers numerous areas in the music industry. He has held positions in the San Antonio Symphony Orchestra (1970 – 1973), the Utah Symphony Orchestra (1974 – 1976) and the Malmö Symphony Orchestra (1990). From 1976 to 1988, Plog was a free-lance artist in Los Angeles with the aim of being a composer.¹⁰ While in Los Angeles, Plog performed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and recorded several Hollywood film scores that included *Gremlins*, *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, *Rocky II* and *Rocky III*, to name a few.¹¹ Currently, Plog is Professor of Music at the Staatsliche Hochschule für Musik (Freiburg, Germany), a position he has held since 1993.

Throughout Plog's career, his aim was to be a performer who composed. Between 1976 and 1989, his interest in composing grew and he gradually began spending more time composing, even having some of his music performed.¹² It was not until December 1989 that Plog realized he wanted to be a composer. While in Berlin, Plog attended a performance of Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* by the Deutsche Oper. Plog recounts:

¹⁰ Grabowski, "Trumpeter Turned Composer," 48.

¹¹ *Anthony Plog, Conductor & Composer* (Accessed 23 September 2011), <www.anthonyplog.com>.

¹² Grabowski, 48.

I remember thinking that I had to be a composer and if I failed, I could say my profession was the same as Prokofiev. I considered myself a trumpet/composer, but after that date, I felt I was a composer still playing the trumpet.¹³

Plog's desire to compose music and retire from the trumpet was a task he contemplated for several years.

I felt that I had basically reached as far as I could as a player (in other words, I was not sure that I could improve upon my limitations because they were technically oriented) but that I did not know how deep I could go as a composer.¹⁴

Plog's approach to composition is unique because he is not a formally trained composer. His approach to composition stems from his background as a performer. In his method book written in 2003, Plog offers his view of music. He comments: "The striving for technical perfection is the striving towards a means and not an end. Expression, in whatever style or form, is the end and should be our ultimate goal."¹⁵ Clearly, phrasing and musicality are extremely important to Plog. In his music, he focuses on what works in terms of form and musical ideas to convey the emotional aspect of the music.¹⁶

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Plog, E-mail Interview, 25 March 2009.

¹⁵ Anthony Plog, *Method for Trumpet: The Plog Program* (California: Balquhidder Music, 2003), 4.

¹⁶ Plog, 27 November 2008.

CHAPTER 3
ANALYSIS OF CONCERTO NO. 1 FOR TRUMPET, BRASS ENSEMBLE AND
PERCUSSION

Historical Information

Concerto no. 1 for Trumpet, Brass Ensemble and Percussion was composed for Carl “Doc” Severinson and the Summit Brass in 1988. Severinson was contracted to premiere and record the concerto with the Summit Brass, but due to his obligations to *The Tonight Show With Johnny Carson*, Severinson was unable to premiere and record it.¹⁷ David Hickman, founder and president of the Summit Brass, agreed to premiere and record the concerto (available on Summit Records, DCD116).

Severinson’s departure impacted the final version of the concerto. Originally, Plog wrote several high note passages for Severinson that were subsequently revised once Severinson left the project. George Vosburgh’s 1990 recording of the concerto with the Millar Brass included some of the high note passages.¹⁸ The published score, available from Editions BIM, contains the passages that Hickman recorded. The solo part is written for B^b trumpet while the ensemble trumpet parts are written for C trumpet. Walburn quoting Plog: “As

¹⁷ Jacob Adam Walburn, “A Performer’s Guide to the Preparation of Anthony Plog’s Concerto no. 1 for solo trumpet, brass ensemble, and percussion” (DMA dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana – Champaign, 2010), see pp. 20 – 21.

¹⁸ Plog, 1 May 2011.

a trumpet player I was so used to transposing Bb parts on the C trumpet, so my idea was that a player could pick the instrument of his choice.”¹⁹

Concerto no. 1, written early in Plog’s composition career, represents a technical showpiece for the trumpet soloist. It contains many traits that have become common in Plog’s musical language, such as chromaticism and rhythmic complexities. Bret Jackson provides a glimpse into the difficulty of the concerto by stating, “The trumpet soloist must have excellent flexibility to negotiate the extremely angular melodies (especially in the fourth movement), advanced double tonguing skills, and most of all, brilliant finger technique.”²⁰

Thematic Organization of the Concerto

For Concerto no. 1, Plog uses motivic matter as a means to bring clarity to the concerto. In his dissertation about Concerto no. 1, Walburn comments that “[Concerto no. 1] is based almost entirely on a relatively short melodic motive, first played by the trumpet soloist at the beginning of the concerto.”²¹ The short melodic motive that Walburn mentions refers to the opening theme, which reveals elements that appear throughout the concerto.

Movement 1

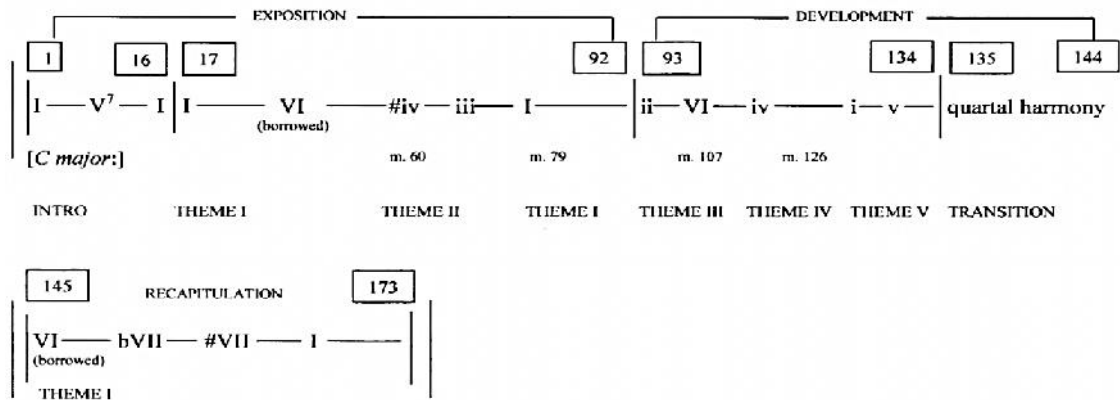
The opening movement of Concerto no. 1 is in modified *sonata* form, with the overall tonality of *C major*. The movement consists of five themes with transitions interspersed between the various themes.

¹⁹ Walburn, 21.

²⁰ Bret Jackson, “Concerto for Solo Trumpet, 14-Part Brass Ensemble and Percussion, Editions BIM, 1988,” *International Trumpet Guild* 19 (December 1994): 70.

²¹ Walburn, 22.

Table 1: Concerto no. 1 for Trumpet and Brass Ensemble, mvmt. 1



The concerto begins with a sixteen-bar introductory theme presented by the solo trumpet, performed off-stage. Walburn states that “the opening solo is inspired by Benjamin Britten’s *Serenade Opus 31 for Tenor, Horn, and Strings*, providing the melodic and intervallic ideas on which each movement of the concerto is based.”²² Walburn goes on to quote Plog as stating:

I believe my idea for the opening was the thought of some sort of ancient signal coming from the mountains, and from some distance away. I think that it was a conscious decision to use the 5th (interval) throughout the piece, and often I like to use a motive as a basis for a certain chord or harmony that will permeate a piece. So quite a bit of the concerto is based on rather open, tonal harmonies which were dictated by the opening fifth.²³

The opening theme (Example 3.1) sets the foundation for the type of melodic material that appears in the concerto. The intervallic structure and the open harmonic structure appear throughout the concerto to unify the piece. The opening theme is written in the primary harmonic series (*C major*) for the B^b

²² Walburn, 23.

²³ Ibid.

trumpet and rises to a high d^3 (written), requiring the soloist to demonstrate control in the upper register. Plog suggests alternate fingerings to mimic the sound of an ancient trumpet.

Example 3.1: Concerto no. 1, mvmt. 1, Intro Theme, Solo Trumpet, mm. 1 – 16

Adagio off stage (freely)

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To demonstrate the use of structural entities, the fifth interval from the opening theme appears as a focal point in successive thematic ideas in the first movement (Example 3.2).

Example 3.2: Concerto no. 1, mvmt. 1, Theme II, Solo Trumpet, mm. 56 – 65

56 (Trumpet solo)

Theme III, mm. 93 – 96

93 (Trumpet solo)

Theme IV, mm. 117 – 119



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In addition to the use of structural entities, mixed meter is prevalent in the concerto. The mixed meter section begins at measure 17 of the first movement and introduces rhythmic vitality that creates a spirited character for the movement. The horns illustrate the rhythmic vitality of the first movement by playing a rhythmic ostinato-like pattern (Example 3.3). The intervallic structure across the instrument groupings maintains the open harmonies from the opening theme in the solo trumpet.

Example 3.3: Concerto no. 1, mvmt. 1, Horns, mm. 17 – 34

17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26

F Horn 1
F Horn 2
F Horn 3
F Horn 4

mp

27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34

F Horn 1

F Horn 2

F Horn 3

F Horn 4

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Another characteristic of Plog seen in Concerto no. 1 is the use of chromaticism. The rhythmic structure of sixteenth note runs and the closed intervallic structure in measure 143 (Example 3.4) represents the framework to which the chromaticism traditionally appears in the concerto.

Example 3.4: Concerto no. 1, mvmt. 1, Solo Trumpet, mm. 143 – 145

143

cresc.

145

f

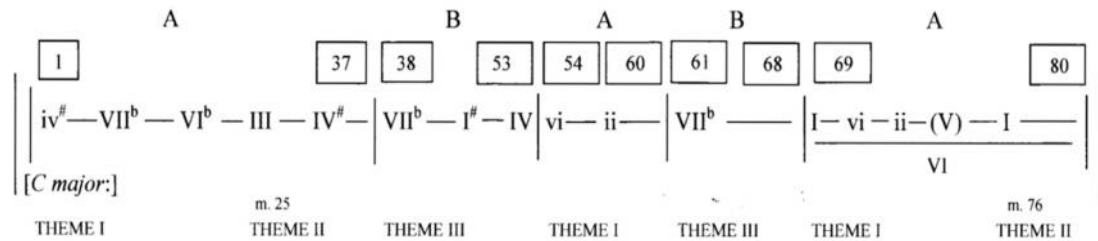
* World copyright 1991 by Editions BIM (Jean-Pierre Mathez) - ref. BIM TP48. Excerpts used with permission (www.editions-bim.com).

Movement 2

The second movement of the concerto follows a simple five-part form, ABABA. Each section is indicated by tempo changes; the A section is indicated by *Adagio* while the B section is indicated by *Allegro*. One characteristic feature

of the movement is the alternation of two motives that appear throughout the movement. The tonal structure of the movement remains in *C major*.

Table 2: Concerto no. 1 for Trumpet and Brass Ensemble, mvmt. 2



The A section (Example 3.5) is represented “...by the horns and features an ascending minor third on the downbeat of measure two that gives the opening a distinctively ‘bluesy’ feel. The first six measures provide one of the two melodic motives that are present throughout the majority of the movement.”²⁴

Example 3.5: Concerto no. 1, mvmt. 2, motive A, Horns, mm. 1

The musical score for four F Horns (1-4) shows motive A. The score is in 4/4 time and features a melodic line with a prominent ascending minor third interval on the downbeat of measure two. The dynamics are marked 'p' (piano).

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The other melodic motive of the movement (Example 3.6) is an octatonic motive (alternating half-step, whole-step intervals) with a minor third leap in the

²⁴ Walburn, 38.

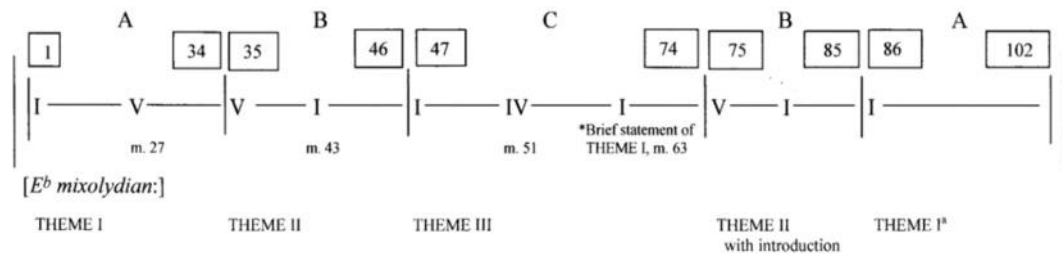
Example 3.7: Concerto no. 1, mvmt. 2, Solo Trumpet, mm. 25 – 31

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Movement 3

The third movement of the concerto follows an arch form. The tonal structure of the movement is E^b mixolydian and consists of three primary thematic ideas.

Table 3: Concerto no. 1 for Trumpet and Brass Ensemble, mvmt. 3



The third movement is structured similarly to the second movement, in which a melodic motive is maintained throughout the movement. This melodic

motive (Example 3.8) appears as a canonic ostinato figure at the unison and repeats every two measures. Walburn notes that “this figure is based almost entirely on the interval of a fifth.”²⁶ Cast in a $\frac{7}{8}$ meter with 2+2+3 metrical divisions, the motive establishes a light character for the movement. Rhythm is an integral structural element for this movement in which the thematic material follows a similar metrical pattern as the melodic motive. The motive also provides rhythmic stability for the soloist because the solo part features complex rhythms throughout the movement.

Example 3.8: Concerto no. 1, mvmt. 3, Melodic Motive, mm. 1 – 4

The image shows a musical score for two trumpets. The top staff is labeled 'Trumpet 1' and the bottom staff is labeled 'Trumpet 2'. Both are in the key of B-flat major (one flat) and 7/8 time. The music is in common time signature (C). The first measure of Trumpet 1 starts with a piano (p) dynamic. The melody in both parts is based on the interval of a fifth. The score shows four measures of music.

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One main characteristic of this movement is the virtuosity displayed at measure 47, evidenced by the rapid string of sixteenth notes. The intervallic structure of Theme III (Example 3.9) is mostly stepwise, embellishing the E^b *mixolydian* scale. The passage is one of the more difficult passages in the concerto.

²⁶ Ibid, 52.

Example 3.9: Concerto no. 1, mvmt. 3, Solo Trumpet, mm. 46 – 58



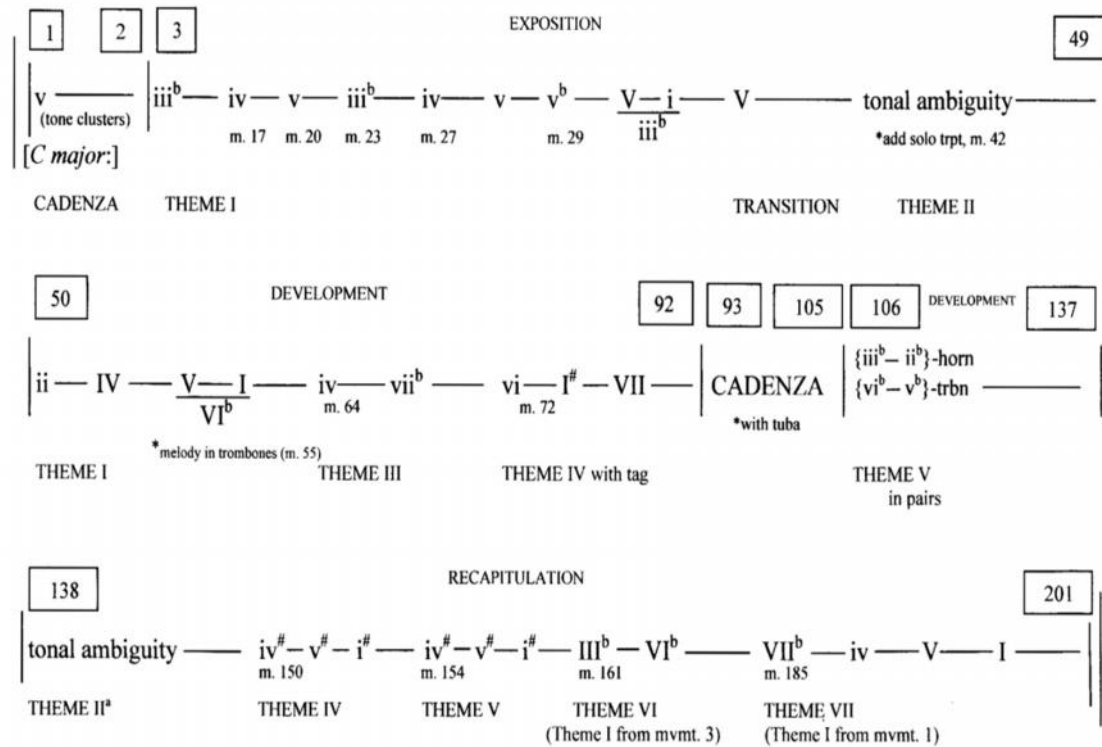
The image displays a musical score for a solo trumpet part, spanning measures 46 to 58. The score is written on a single staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The music is characterized by a continuous, flowing melodic line with frequent eighth-note patterns and slurs. Measure numbers 50, 53, 56, and 59 are explicitly labeled at the beginning of their respective lines. The notation includes various articulations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings like 'p' (piano) and 'f' (forte).

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Movement 4

The fourth movement of the concerto follows traditional *sonata* form. The tonal structure of the movement returns to the overall key of the concerto, C *major* and has a total of seven thematic ideas.

Table 4: Concerto no. 1 for Trumpet and Brass Ensemble, mvmt. 4



Technically and musically, the fourth movement is one of the most difficult movements of the entire Concerto. Theme II (Example 3.10) exemplifies the type of thematic material and difficulty encountered in the fourth movement. The theme features a culmination of several Plog characteristics in one thematic idea. It is extremely angular and demands great physicality by the performer,²⁷ incorporates a high degree of chromaticism, portions of an octatonic scale and rhythmic complexity.

²⁷ Ibid, 65.

Example 3.10: Concerto no. 1, mvmt. 4, Solo Trumpet, mm. 42 – 49

The image displays a musical score for a solo trumpet part, consisting of four staves of music. The first staff begins at measure 42 with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The second staff starts at measure 45. The third staff starts at measure 47 and concludes with a fermata. The fourth staff starts at measure 50 with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The music is written in a single treble clef and features a complex melodic line with various intervals, including sixths and sevenths, and some chromaticism. The key signature has two flats, and the time signature is 4/4.

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The recapitulation in the fourth movement of a Plog concerto provides a clear illustration of thematic coherence. Rather than present themes solely from the final movement, as is traditionally expected in the recapitulation, Plog includes Theme I from the third movement (Example 3.11) at measure 161.

Example 3.11: Concerto no. 1, mvmt. 4, Brass Ensemble, mm. 162 – 166

Musical score for Brass Ensemble, measures 162-166. The score is in 4/4 time and features four staves for Trumpets (C) and four staves for French Horns. The music begins at measure 162. The Trumpets and French Horns play a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, with dynamic markings of *p* (piano) and *f* (forte). The French Horns play a similar pattern, with dynamic markings of *p* and *f*. The Trumpets play a similar pattern, with dynamic markings of *p* and *f*.

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Plog furthers the idea of thematic coherence with a modified restatement of the opening melody from the first movement. The opening theme represents an overarching thematic idea because it appears throughout the concerto and returns at the end of the fourth movement (Example 3.13).

Example 3.12: Concerto no. 1, mvmt. 4, Solo Trumpet, mm. 185 – 192

Musical score for Solo Trumpet, measures 185-192. The score is in 4/4 time and features a single staff for the Solo Trumpet. The music begins at measure 185. The Solo Trumpet plays a melodic line with dynamic markings of *f* (forte) and *ff* (fortissimo). The tempo is marked *faster*. The Solo Trumpet plays a melodic line with dynamic markings of *f* and *ff*.

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CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF CONCERTO NO. 2 FOR TRUMPET AND ORCHESTRA

Historical Information

Concerto no. 2 for Trumpet and Orchestra was commissioned by Nick Norton, Principal Trumpet of the Utah Symphony Orchestra, and the Utah Symphony Orchestra in 1992. Plog completed the concerto in 1994 and the premiere was scheduled for the fall of 1995. In early 1995, Norton suffered a traumatic bicycle accident that resulted in postponing the premiere until the 1996 – 1997 season.²⁸ The concerto premiered on February 28, 1997 at Maurice Abravanel Hall in Salt Lake City, Utah with Richard Buckley conducting.

Concerto no. 2 follows many of the technical characteristics of concerto no. 1 but it goes beyond the technical to encompass a deep expressive dimension.²⁹ For Concerto no. 2, Plog composed “a piece that was deep and meaningful,”³⁰ “not just another trumpet jock piece.”³¹ The concerto is tonal, very melodic, and contains extra-musical connotations of life and death in the second movement that reveal intense emotions rarely found in a trumpet concerto.

²⁸ Lance S. Gudmundsen, “Norton Smacks His Lips at Chance to Play Concerto,” *The Salt Lake Tribune* (February 23, 1997), D3.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 14 December 2010.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 27 November 2008.

³¹ *Ibid*, 6 December 2008.

The concerto is part of a series of works for trumpet that Plog began composing in the 1990's. The series included four compositions that are

different in nature: a *Postcards*, which would be for a solo brass instrument; a *Three Miniatures* with piano, which would be more technical and a bit more quirky; a lyrical *Nocturne*; and finally a *Concerto*, which would be the biggest and most substantial of the four pieces.³²

Thematic Organization of the Concerto

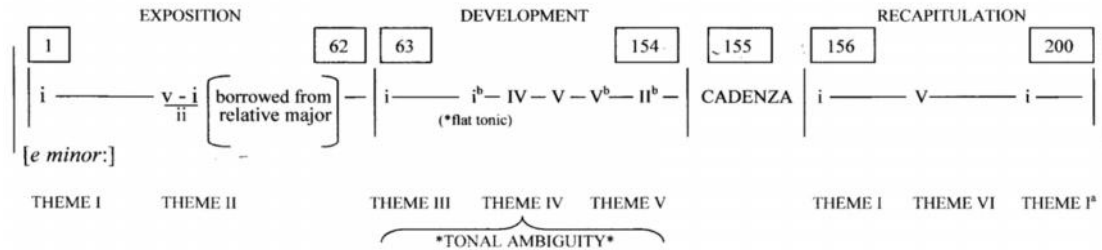
Plog uses motivic and rhythmic ideas as a building block for thematic material in all four movements of Concerto no. 2. Many of the themes in the piece are derived from elements or motives introduced in the opening theme of the first movement, including a triplet sixteenth rhythmic structure and a minor-major seventh chord intervallic motive. Other important structural entities used in the concerto include a minor third intervallic motive and an octatonic chromatic intervallic motive.

Movement 1

The first movement of Concerto no. 2 is in modified *sonata-allegro* form. The tonal structure of the opening movement is *e minor* and consists of five thematic ideas.

³² Plog, 25 March 2009.

Table 5: Concerto no. 2 for Trumpet and Orchestra, mvmt. 1



The movement begins with a two measure introduction in the double basses before the solo trumpet enters at measure 3 with a sweeping melodic gesture. The theme presented by the solo trumpet (Example 4.1) establishes the type of material that characterizes Concerto no. 2. In composing the opening theme for Concerto no. 2, Plog states:

...I had been writing a number of pieces that had very fast first movements and in the case of the Concerto I wanted to begin with a tempo that was more *moderato* than *allegro* (or *vivace*), and this theme came to mind.³³

Example 4.1: Concerto no. 2, mvmt 1, Theme I, Solo Trumpet, mm. 3 – 5



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Plog describes the opening theme as a “unifying device,”³⁴ in which elements of the opening theme appear as motives in other thematic ideas. Two motivic ideas that are taken from the opening theme and figure prominently in the

³³ Plog, 16 March 2010.

³⁴ Ibid, 27 November 2008.

thematic idea.³⁶ Theme IV (Example 4.4) is presented in the major mode in contrast to the minor mode from the opening theme. Each triad oscillates between two different tonal constructs, *E^b major* and *A major*.

Example 4.4: Concerto no. 2, mvmt 1, Theme IV, Solo Trumpet, mm. 93 – 101

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The recapitulation (mm. 156 – 200) begins with a restatement of Theme I, including the two bar introduction in the double basses. The recapitulation also restates Theme IV, where each triad descends chromatically (Example 4.5) while the bass accompaniment ascends chromatically. The contrary motion results in a “wind down” effect toward a pedal point on the tone *e*¹ that is sustained under a fermata. The pedal point functions as a point of elision between the first and second movements.

³⁶ Plog, 16 March 2010.

Example 4.5: Concerto no. 2, mvmt 1, Piano Reduction, mm. 192 – 200

The image displays a piano reduction of a musical score for Example 4.5, covering measures 192 to 200. It is presented in two systems. The first system, starting at measure 192, features a treble clef staff with rests and a bass clef staff with active piano accompaniment. A dashed line labeled "Sua bass." connects the bass clef staff to the treble clef staff. The second system, starting at measure 197, shows the treble clef staff with rests and the bass clef staff with active piano accompaniment. A bracket labeled "attacca" spans the end of the second system.

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Movement 2

The second movement begins with a cadenza (Example 4.6) that occurs over the pedal point sustained from the first movement. The pedal point becomes a focal point in transitioning into the second movement, as it serves as a tonal fulcrum to seamlessly modulate from *e minor* in the first movement to a *minor* to start the second movement.

Example 4.6: Concerto no. 2, mvmt 2, Opening Cadenza

Adagio, with freedom

Trumpet in C

Piano

mp

rit. *a tempo*

(accel.) *(rit.)* *(a tempo)*

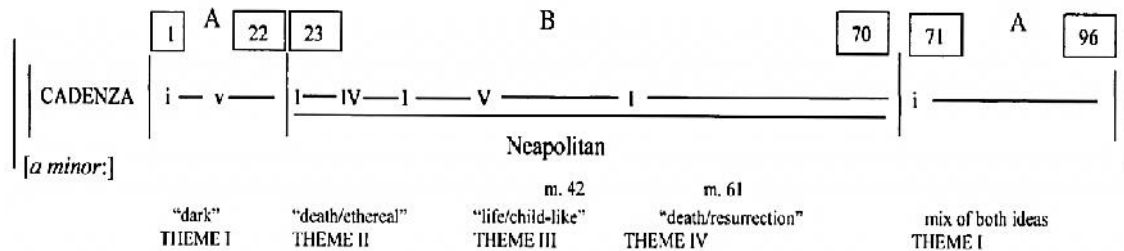
rit.

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The second movement follows a simple three-part form (ABA) with an overall tonality in *A minor* and *B^b major*. The movement is foreboding and contemplative, established by the opening cadenza. The movement contrasts between two major ideas – life and death.³⁷

³⁷ Plog, 8 February 2009.

Table 6: Concerto no. 2 for Trumpet and Orchestra, mvmt. 2



The dark mood of the movement is illustrated in Theme II, which Plog characterizes as a “fanfare of death.”³⁸ Theme II (Example 4.7) features the triplet rhythmic structure from the opening theme in the first movement. The thematic idea is repeated several times consecutively, making endurance and consistency an issue for some players.

Example 4.7: Concerto no. 2, mvmt 2, Solo Trumpet, mm. 23 – 25



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As the soloist completes the death fanfares, “one of two key themes of the entire concerto”³⁹ is introduced at measure 42. Theme III (Example 4.8) represents the idea of life, portrayed in the innocence of children. The theme is subtle and creates a lighter feeling to the movement, offering musical relief from

³⁸ Plog, 8 February 2009.

³⁹ Norton, *ITG Conference*, home video, 1997.

the “death fanfares.” The theme is based entirely in triplets, which provides an example of thematic coherence.

Example 4.8: Concerto no. 2, mvmt 2, Piano Reduction, mm. 42 – 44



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The next major point in the second movement occurs at measure 61, which is the climax of the movement. Plog presents the Lutheran chorale, *Alle Menschen müssen sterben* (“All Men Must Die”), juxtaposed against the flowing triplet-based “life” theme. The chorale represents the other key theme of the entire concerto. The chorale is the same chorale that Hindemith used in the *Trumpet Sonate* (1939), but Plog uses the original harmonization. Plog comments on the use of the chorale as such:

This chorale is actually a resurrection chorale; all men must die, which eventually leads to life after death. My intention in using this [chorale] was to use it as a contrasting theme (and tonality) from the preceding theme, which is an innocent sounding triplet passage. So, I wanted to contrast the beauty and innocence of life with the ultimate tragedy that we must all face. Before I wrote the concerto, a grandfatherly person died on our street and I remember being outside with some of the grieving parents while at the same time young children were playing on the street...and that is the general feeling I was trying to portray in that section of the piece.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Plog, 8 February 2009.

This climax (Example 4.9) demonstrates “Plog’s most meaningful writing for the concerto.”⁴¹ He juxtaposes the two main ideas of the movement, life and death, to display deep emotion rarely encountered in the extant literature.

Example 4.9: Concerto no. 2, mvmt 2, Chorale, Piano Reduction, mm. 61 – 68

The image shows a piano reduction of a chorale. The top system includes a vocal line with the lyrics "Alle Menschen müssen sterben" and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a complex, rhythmic pattern of chords and single notes, often in triplets, creating a dense and dramatic texture. The vocal line is a simple, melodic phrase that contrasts with the intricate piano accompaniment.

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During the final section of the movement, Plog introduces a melodic motive (Example 4.10) at measure 83 that establishes the intervallic structure of the third movement.

⁴¹ Norton, *ITG Conference*, home video, 1997.

Example 4.10: Concerto no. 2, mvmt 2, Solo Trumpet, mm. 83 – 86

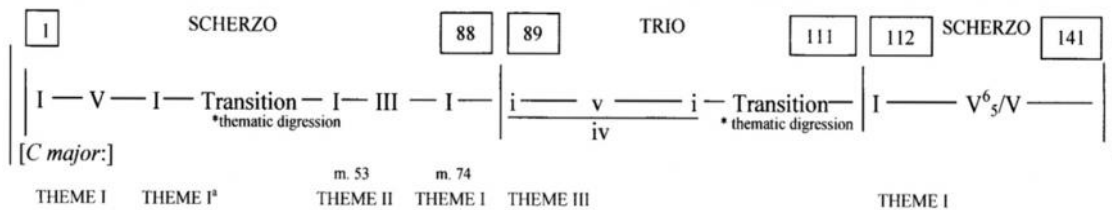


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Movement 3

The third movement of the concerto follows a *Scherzo and Trio* form. The movement is extremely virtuosic, is light and fleeting, and requires multiple tonguing. The movement is based almost entirely on a triplet rhythmic structure. The lightness of the movement contrasts with the emotional heaviness of the second movement. Plog explores the different timbres of the trumpet in this movement with the whispa mute, cup mute, and straight mute. The tonal structure of the movement is *C major* and contains three major thematic ideas.

Table 7: Concerto no. 2 for Trumpet and Orchestra, mvmt. 3



The movement begins with a thematic idea that permeates the movement. It appears in eighty-two of the 141 total measures of the movement. Theme I (Example 4.11) appears in the solo trumpet and uses a whispa mute. The

intervallic structure of Theme I outlines the same intervallic structure as the final theme of the second movement (compare Examples 4.10 and 4.11).

Example 4.11: Concerto no. 2, mvmt 3, Solo Trumpet, mm. 1 – 9

Allegro vivace
Whisper mute
mf (Sounding *pp*)

4

8

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In subsequent statements of Theme I, a slightly modified form of the theme is used. The first statement of Theme I^a (Example 4.12) appears at measure 25. The melodic contour is more compact and the harmonic movement changes tonalities every two bars when compared to the original statement. In addition to the variances in Theme I, the solo trumpet is now in cup mute. With each mute change, the music gradually gets louder.

Example 4.12: Concerto no. 2, mvmt 3, Solo Trumpet, mm. 25 – 32

Musical score for Solo Trumpet, mm. 25–32. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It consists of three staves. The first staff (mm. 25–27) begins with the instruction "cup mute" and a dynamic marking of *p*. The second staff (mm. 28–30) continues the melodic line. The third staff (mm. 31–32) concludes the excerpt with a final note and a fermata.

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The *Trio* section (mm. 89 – 111) introduces a calmer section of thematic material. The new section establishes another primary thematic idea for the third movement. Theme III (Example 4.13) is in *f minor* and features an ascending minor third intervallic motive. The intervallic structure is similar to the thematic structure of Theme II from the first movement (compare Examples 4.3 and 4.13). For Theme III, Plog uses a meter shift to create contrast within the overall form of the movement.

Example 4.13: Concerto no. 2, mvmt 3, Solo Trumpet, mm. 89 – 94

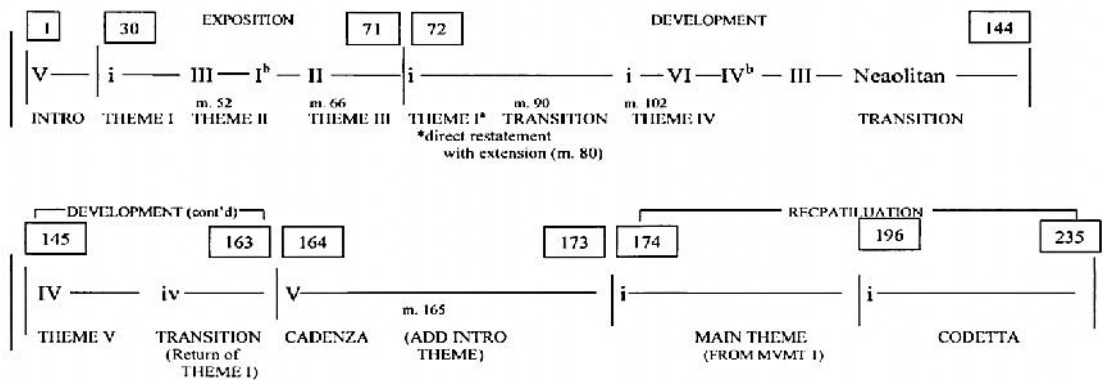
Musical score for Solo Trumpet, mm. 89–94. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It consists of two staves. The first staff (mm. 89–92) begins with the instruction "meno mosso" and "open", and a dynamic marking of *p*. The second staff (mm. 93–94) continues the melodic line.

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Movement 4

The fourth movement of the concerto follows *sonata-rondo* form. The tonal structure of the movement returns to *e minor* and consists of seven thematic ideas. The final movement of Concerto no. 2 is the longest and arguably one of the most difficult of the entire concerto, particularly from the standpoint of endurance. The movement features asymmetrical rhythms, a high tessitura at the end and a large degree of chromaticism.

Table 8: Concerto no. 2 for Trumpet and Orchestra, mvmt. 4



The first thematic idea of the movement (Example 4.14) appears at measure 30. Theme I features an octatonic pattern that creates an odd finger pattern for the soloist. The structure and outline of Theme I are maintained throughout the entire movement.

Example 4.14: Concerto no. 2, mvmt 4, Solo Trumpet, mm. 30 – 34

Allegro moderato



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A main characteristic of the fourth movement is the appearance of asymmetrical rhythms. Theme II (Example 4.15) is introduced at measure 52, and alternates between $\frac{4}{4}$ and $\frac{11}{16}$ meters. The asymmetrical pattern creates the rhythmic complexity that characterizes the movement. The intervallic structure becomes inverted at measure 56, which is another characteristic of Plog. The movement employs a similar rhythmic outline in subsequent themes.

Example 4.15: Concerto no. 2, mvmt 4, Solo Trumpet, mm. 52 – 60



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In addition to the technical focus of the fourth movement, a lyrical theme is introduced at measure 145. Theme IV (Example 4.16) offers contrast to the many technical passages that dominate the movement. The lyrical passage introduces structural elements from the first movement, notably the triplet-sixteenth motive from the opening theme at measure 149. The appearance of the motive in the fourth movement demonstrates the importance of the motive to the overall form of the concerto.

Example 4.16: Concerto no. 2, mvmt 4, Solo Trumpet, mm. 145 – 156

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The cadenza in a Plog concerto is an important component to his music. The cadenza section of the fourth movement (mm. 164 – 174) represents a typical Plog cadenza by restating thematic ideas from the fourth movement and thematic ideas from the other movements. For example, the cadenza (Example 4.17) presents motivic fragments of Theme II and Theme I, as well as motivic

ideas from the second movement (the chromatic sixteenth notes before *Allegro moderato* section) and the first movement (minor-major seventh chord intervallic structure before the *lento* section).

Unlike most cadenzas, Plog adds the accompaniment to play with the soloist at the *lento* section. The accompaniment restates the introductory theme from the beginning of the movement while the soloist performs a motivic idea from Theme II of the fourth movement. The addition of the accompaniment adds to the overall difficulty of the concerto, particularly in terms of rhythmic precision between the soloist and the accompaniment. The soloist ends the cadenza figure with a descending octatonic – chromatic pattern leading to e^1 , the tonic.

Example 4.17: Concerto no. 2, mvmt 4, Cadenza, mm. 164 – 173

The musical score for Example 4.17 consists of five systems of music. The first system shows the beginning of the cadenza with a soloist line and an accompaniment line. The soloist line starts with a *f* dynamic and a *slow* tempo marking, followed by a *p* dynamic. The accompaniment line starts with a *f* dynamic. The second system continues the soloist line with a *rit.* marking and the accompaniment line with *accel. e cresc.* and *f* dynamics. The third system is marked **Allegro moderato** and features a soloist line with *p*, *cresc.*, *poco*, *a*, and *poco* dynamics. The fourth and fifth systems continue the *Allegro moderato* section with complex rhythmic patterns in both the soloist and accompaniment parts.

165

ff
(Engl. Horn)
lento
mf

169

mf

172

cresc.

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The chromatic descent at the end of the cadenza leads into a full restatement of Theme I from the first movement. The return of the opening theme of the concerto at measure 174 demonstrates that the opening theme functions as an over-arching thematic idea because it appears at the beginning

and end of the entire concerto. After the initial restatement, the main theme undergoes a slight variation at measure 194. Instead of repeating the e minor-major seventh chord, as in the opening movement (compare Examples 4.18-a and 4.18-b), Plog descends chromatically to transition into a new section of thematic material, the codetta section.

Example 4.18-a: Concerto no. 2, mvmt 1, Solo trumpet, mm. 19 – 21



Example 4.18-b: Concerto no. 2, mvmt 4, Solo Trumpet, mm. 191 – 196



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The codetta (Example 4.19) serves as a finale to the concerto. The codetta section begins with an ascending chromatic line, which builds rhythmic and melodic energy that continues with the solo trumpet line at measure 220. The codetta ends with one final statement of the over-arching theme for the concerto at measure 233. The final two tones of the theme, traditionally slurred

in previous statements, are articulated to bring about a clear sense of finality to the concerto.

Example 4.19: Concerto no. 2, mvmt 4, Solo Trumpet, mm. 220 – 235

The image displays a musical score for a Solo Trumpet part, spanning measures 220 to 235. The score is written on five staves. The first staff (measures 220-221) begins with a *ff* dynamic and features a series of sixteenth-note patterns with slurs and accents. The second staff (measures 222-224) starts with a *p* dynamic, followed by *ff*, *p*, and *ff* markings. The third staff (measures 225-227) continues with *p*, *ff*, *p*, *ff*, *p*, and *ff* dynamics. The fourth staff (measures 228-230) shows *ff*, *p*, and *ff* dynamics. The fifth staff (measures 231-235) begins with a *ff* dynamic, includes a first ending bracket labeled '1' over measures 232-233, and concludes with a final phrase marked with accents and a *ff* dynamic.

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CHAPTER 5

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PERFORMER

Plog's trumpet concertos are extremely difficult requiring notable finger dexterity, rhythmic stability, endurance and range. This chapter will outline suggestions for the difficult sections of each concerto by drawing upon first-hand experience of preparing each concerto, the composer's input, and input from the performers who premiered and recorded these works. Each concerto is discussed in a separate sub-section.

There are three general characteristics that encompass Plog's stylistic traits. 1) The use of chromaticism is an integral component of his compositional language; 2) the use of complex rhythms and mixed meter; and 3) thematic ideas are based upon motivic ideas that are introduced in the opening theme. These three characteristics are imbued in Plog's music and also reflect cohesive elements that can facilitate in mastering the numerous challenges in these concertos.

In regard to the first characteristic, Plog does not use key signatures in his music but rather uses chromaticism as a way to build a tonal reference. Many of the passages in Plog's music outline portions of a chromatic scale and an octatonic scale. Instances of a chromatic scale occur at points of modulation while the octatonic passages in his music embellish the melodic line. The

octatonic passages create the finger difficulties noted in his music. Despite the heavy reliance upon chromaticism, it “does not deteriorate into extreme chromaticism, but [Plog’s] music is still tonal.”⁴²

Secondly, the rhythmic complexities that abound in Plog’s music typically entail mixed meter. The complexities in his music follow clearly defined rhythmic patterns that rely on repetitive figures. The patterns used by Plog can be readily identified by how the beats are grouped together in the mixed meter sections.

Thirdly, and most importantly, the opening theme for each concerto reveals many of the cohesive elements that appear throughout each concerto. Elements of the opening theme appear as motivic fragments for creating new thematic ideas. For that reason, identifying and practicing the motives will facilitate in preparing the work for a recital or other public performance. The unifying characteristic of the opening theme is further complemented with a direct restatement of the theme at the end of each concerto.

Concerto no. 1 for Trumpet, Brass Ensemble and Percussion

The style of Concerto no. 1 is virtuosic and aggressive. The concerto outlines many characteristics of Plog; use of chromaticism, rhythmically complex passages and a high tessitura. David Hickman, who premiered and recorded the concerto, expounds on the difficulty of the work by stating: “The most challenging things are: 1) mastering the difficult and often awkward solo passages, 2) developing the stamina to play the louder sections over a 17-piece brass and

⁴² Norton, E-mail Interview, 12 December 2010.

percussion group playing fortissimo. I honestly feel that this concerto is the loudest solo work I have ever played.”⁴³

In preparing Concerto no. 1 for a public performance, it is important that the performer begin practicing the concerto at a slow tempo and use a metronome. Slow practice from the start will aid in solidifying the difficult finger passages, develop the stamina necessary to play the concerto without fatigue and develop clean articulation for the many technical passages of the concerto. In addition to slow practice, the performer should listen to recordings. Concerto no. 1 has been released on three CD's, two by David Hickman. Hickman's premiere recording⁴⁴ is highly recommended because Plog oversaw the recording process.

Movement 1

The character of the opening movement of Concerto no. 1 is rhythmically active and spirited, employing mixed meter. Though much of the material in mixed meter occurs in the ensemble parts, the performer should be aware of the beat division for counting purposes.

The main difficulty of the first movement is the intervallic structure of Theme III (Example 5.1). The theme features the interval of a fifth, one primary element that is introduced in the opening theme. The performer should start with slow practice to solidify the perfect fifth interval each time it is presented and

⁴³ David Hickman, E-mail Interview conducted by the author, 26 April 2011.

⁴⁴ Anthony Plog, *Anthony Plog: Colors For Brass*, Summit Brass and Saint Louis Brass Quintet, cond. Carl Topilow; digital disc (Summit Records, DCD 116, 1990).

emphasize the lower note. As the theme unfolds, the intervallic structure expands to include fourths, sixths, sevenths and octaves. For the different intervals, the soloist should focus on hearing the pitches and using a firm articulation for the tongued portions of the passage. David Hickman comments on how he prepared the concerto and notes that he divided his practice into two categories – “one, to just get the notes, and two, to get the ‘feel’ of the music.”⁴⁵

Example 5.1: Concerto no. 1, mvmt. 1, Solo Trumpet, mm. 93 – 107

The musical score for Solo Trumpet, measures 93-107, is presented in four staves. The first staff (measures 93-96) begins with a *mf* dynamic and features a melodic line with a slur. The second staff (measures 97-100) includes a *cres.* marking and a *f* dynamic. The third staff (measures 101-104) continues the melodic development. The fourth staff (measures 105-107) features triplets and ends with a *p* dynamic. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature changes from 4/4 to 3/4 and back to 4/4.

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Movement 2

The second movement is characterized as serene and chaotic. The movement contains some of the most complex rhythms the soloist will encounter in the entire work at measure 25. The main difficulty attributed to Theme II

⁴⁵ Hickman, E-mail Interview, 26 April 2011.

(Example 5.2) is rhythmic stability and precision, particularly at measure 29. The performer must work with a metronome in this passage, placing the first note of each grouping directly on the downbeat to stabilize the rhythmic structure.

Example 5.2: Concerto no. 1, mvmt. 2, Solo Trumpet, mm. 25 – 37

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In practicing Theme II, writing in the downbeats and upbeats above the bar line is recommended. Walburn noted a similar practice routine in his dissertation.⁴⁶ Such a practice strategy (Example 5.3) provides a visual

⁴⁶ Walburn, 46.

reference for identifying the beat divisions in each measure. The performer should practice the passage at a slow tempo to solidify the rhythm, pitches and disjunct intervallic structure at measure 30. “Double tonguing will be required on all thirty-second note passages. Isolating these passages should help facilitate better accuracy and consistency.”⁴⁷ Once the performer becomes familiar with the rhythmic passages, he or she can begin “to play the entire passage in order to address issues of endurance.”⁴⁸

Example 5.3: Concerto no. 1, mvmt. 2, Practice Strategy, mm. 30 – 32

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Movement 3

The character of the third movement is light and virtuosic and continues the rhythmic complexities that were introduced in the second movement. The movement features a $\frac{7}{8}$ meter, which should be divided into a 2 + 2 + 3 beat

⁴⁷ Ibid, 47 – 48.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

pattern. The performer should listen for the rhythmic ostinato (Example 5.4) because the ostinato figure acts as a metronome for the performer.⁴⁹ Listening for the ostinato and the 2 + 2 + 3 pattern will be helpful when the rhythmic structure becomes more complex at measure 47.

Example 5.4: Concerto no. 1, mvmt. 3, Rhythmic Ostinato, Ensemble Trumpets,
mm. 1 – 5



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The melodic passage at measure 47 is one of the most difficult passages in the entire concerto, presenting a virtuosic display of technical showmanship. The challenges presented in this particular passage focus on rhythmic precision and finger dexterity. The intervallic outline of the passage is mostly step-wise in E-flat (concert pitch) mixolydian.⁵⁰ It is suggested that the performer identify and emphasize the primary notes of each beat grouping (indicated by arrows) to stabilize the rhythm and maintain the beat division of mixed meter. The primary tones outline tonic, mediant, subdominant, dominant, submediant, and flatted seventh scale degrees within the overall key.

⁴⁹ Walburn, 57.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

Example 5.5: Concerto no. 1, mvmt. 3, Practice Strategy, mm. 47 – 59

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Movement 4

The final movement of Concerto no. 1 is the liveliest and perhaps the most difficult movement of the entire concerto. The movement is characterized by the fast-paced rhythms and spirited nature of the melodies.

The numerous difficulties of this movement, primarily finger dexterity, chromaticism and complex rhythms are all displayed in Theme VI (Example 5.6). Double tonguing will be required for this passage and should be used at the onset of practice. To overcome the difficulties of Theme VI, the performer should start at the end and work backwards toward the beginning of the passage. One should practice small sections at a time and repeat each section numerous times to gain facility in negotiating the angular portions of the passage. For example,

the performer can start on beat two of measure 158 and play to the end of the passage, repeating the section several times without a mistake. Then add the previous measure and play to the end of the passage. The performer should continue this drill until the entire passage is mastered.

Example 5.6: Concerto no. 1, mvmt. 4, Solo Trumpet, mm. 142 – 161

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Concerto no. 2 for Trumpet and Orchestra

When compared to Concerto no. 1, the style of Concerto no. 2 is expressive and melodic. It is a work that contains many characteristics of Plog – rhythmic complexity and chromaticism – but goes beyond the technical to focus

on expressive aspects. The concerto presents several difficulties, which include finger dexterity, multiple tonguing, nimble articulation, rhythmic stability and endurance. Though the piece is difficult from a technical standpoint, the performer should focus on performing the themes with a sense of musical line to reflect the expressive characteristics of the concerto.

In preparing Concerto no. 2 for a public performance, the performer should follow similar guidelines outlined for Concerto no. 1. It is important, however, to reiterate here that “one must practice the difficult passages very slowly for a prolonged period of time building endurance as well as technique.”⁵¹ There is only one recording of Concerto no. 2, released in 2006.⁵² This recording is highly recommended because Plog oversaw the recording process.

Movement 1

The first movement of Concerto no. 2 is melodic, tonally stable and establishes the pace and style of the entire concerto. The opening theme presents various elements that appear throughout the first movement. The primary elements of the first movement include a minor-major seventh chord intervallic structure and a triplet rhythmic structure. Chromaticism in the first movement represents a typical usage throughout the concerto.

Perhaps the greatest challenge of the movement is rhythmic precision, particularly with the triplet-sixteenth motive. The rhythmic motive appears in

⁵¹ John Holt, E-mail Interview conducted by the author, 11, February 2011.

⁵² Anthony Plog, Trumpet Concertos, John Holt, Trumpet, Slovak Radio Orchestra, cond. Kirk Trevor; digital disc (Crystal Records, CD765, 2006).

various forms throughout the first movement, making consistency a priority. The performer should isolate each occurrence of the triplet-sixteenth motive (Example 5.7) and work towards achieving a consistent sound. The motive should be triple tongued to give it a sense of melodic direction, which will help establish the melodic character of the movement.

Example 5.7: Concerto no. 2, Theme I, Solo Trumpet, mm. 13 – 14



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Plog's penchant for shifting meters becomes the basis for the rhythmic structure in Theme IV, which is based on the triplet motivic idea from the opening theme.⁵³ Due to the different groupings (triple and duple), the main difficulty of the theme is with the $\frac{4}{8}$ meter. Here, the triadic sonority is slightly displaced because it is not grouped the same as it is in the $\frac{6}{16}$ meter. An effective way to practice this section is to use the following beat division: 2 + 3 + 3. Dividing the measure into the notated division as demonstrated in Example 5.8 will maintain the triadic structure similar to the $\frac{6}{16}$ meter.⁵⁴

⁵³ Plog, 16 March 2010.

⁵⁴ Norton, 28 February 2010.

Example 5.8: Concerto no. 2, Practice Guide, Solo Trumpet, mm. 93 – 94



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Movement 2

The second movement is dark, brooding and deeply expressive. It is one of the more difficult movements of the concerto in terms of musicality. Theme II (Example 5.9) illustrates the difficulty of the movement due to the angular melody in the middle to upper register of the instrument and remains in the upper register for an extended period of time. Theme II should be played with strong articulation to create the desired effect of a “death fanfare” as noted by Plog.⁵⁵ To develop the desired articulation for this passage, etude numbers fifty-four and fifty-five from Plog’s *Method for Trumpet, Book Six* are excellent examples.

Example 5.9: Concerto no. 2, mvmt. 2, Solo Trumpet, mm. 37 – 44



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⁵⁵ Plog, 8 February 2009.

The expressive nature of the movement is illustrative in one of the main ideas of the second movement, life. The soloist enters at measure 49 with a soaring expressive theme that is played over the “life” theme. The solo trumpet theme is quite difficult from the standpoint of musicality and also because it comes directly after the pointillistic “death fanfares.” The first five pick-up notes in measure 49 represent the crux of playing the passage with expression. These notes provide “a ‘runway’ to the lyrical section,”⁵⁶ which Norton asked Plog to add for him. It is critical that the performer play the section with a sense of musical direction and adhere to the written dynamics to avoid overplaying the passage.

Example 5.10: Concerto no. 2, mvmt. 2, Solo Trumpet, mm. 49 – 61

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Movement 3

The third movement of Concerto no. 2 is the lightest and shortest, requiring the soloist to display his or her ability to triple tongue. The fast moving triplets that abound in the thematic material create the fleeting character that is

⁵⁶ Norton, 28 February 2010.

associated with this movement. Mutes are also used, creating issues of balance between the soloist and the accompanying ensemble (orchestra or piano reduction).

The performer should begin his or her practice isolating the primary tones of Theme I, which are marked with an arrow in Example 5.11. The indicated tones provide the melodic framework of the movement and should be lightly emphasized, using a soft accent so as not to overpower the musical texture. The repeated notes should be played as light as possible. Each statement of Theme I should be played in a similar style, regardless of pitch level.

Example 5.11: Concerto no. 2, mvmt. 3, Solo Trumpet, mm. 1 – 9

Allegro vivace
 Whispa mute
mf (Sounding *pp*)

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The use of mutes becomes important in this movement. The movement begins with a whispa mute, which creates a very soft and subtle tone. As the movement progresses, the soloist goes from whispa mute to cup mute to straight mute. Upon each statement of Theme I, the dynamics gradually get louder. The soloist should take into account how the mutes affect the volume of sound since

the change in mute will account for a majority of the indicated increase in volume. It is recommended that the soloist stay within a *mezzo-piano* sounding dynamic when using cup mute and straight mute.

The *Trio* section at measure 89 presents issues of rhythmic precision between the soloist and the accompaniment. Theme III (Example 5.12) is based almost entirely on a minor third intervallic structure. It is important for the performer to maintain a light articulation throughout this section.

Example 5.12: Concerto no. 2, mvmt. 3, Solo Trumpet, mm. 89 – 109

89 *meno mosso*
open
p

93

97

101

104

107

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One of the difficulties of the above passage is rhythmic precision, particularly maintaining evenness in the sixteenth notes. The performer should practice this section with a metronome due to the syncopation of the melodic

idea. The tendency for most musicians will be to rush this section because of the fleeting triplets from the previous section. To assist keeping the sixteenth notes even and in a steady tempo, one suggestion is to play the rhythm on one note (Example 5.13) to ensure rhythmic accuracy. The performer must strive for clarity and evenness throughout this section. Once mastered, the performer should play the theme as written with the same consistency of sound.

Example 5.13: Concerto no. 2, mvmt. 3, Practice Strategy, mm. 94 – 109



Movement 4

The final movement of Concerto no. 2 is the longest, and arguably one of the most difficult. The movement is rhythmically complex and cyclical since many of the thematic ideas and intervallic structures are repeated throughout the movement. For instance, the intervallic structure in Theme I features an

octatonic pattern (Example 5.14) and represents a typical outline of chromaticism and thematic ideas for this movement. The performer should also pay close attention to the accents, as the accents are also emphasized in the accompaniment.

Example 5.14: Concerto no. 2, mvmt. 4, Solo Trumpet, mm. 30 – 34

st. mute **Allegro moderato**

31

33

mf

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One of the difficult sections of the fourth movement is demonstrated by the asymmetrical meters introduced at measure 52. The difficulties of Theme II are rhythmic precision and the disjunct intervallic structure. To begin, slow practice is a necessity, focusing on clear articulation. The repeated tones of Theme II should be played with a light feel, while the interval skips should be played slightly heavier, with more emphasis. Placing a slight accent on the first note of each beat grouping, as illustrated in Example 5.15, will help to solidify the disjunct structure of the thematic idea. The performer should note that the written tone e^2 at measure 58 should be marked $e^{b2.57}$.

⁵⁷ Holt, 11, February 2011.

Example 5.15: Concerto no. 2, mvmt. 4, Solo Trumpet, mm. 52 – 60

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The codetta section (mm. 197 – 235) presents a moderate degree of difficulty in terms of endurance and range. The soloist should focus on clean articulation throughout the passage. The main difficulty of this theme is maintaining consistency in the articulation and wind support. An effective practice tool is to start at the end of the passage and work towards the beginning. For example, start on beat three of measure 229 and play to the end of the passage. The performer should practice small sections at a time, playing through each section numerous times listening for a consistent and open sound. The performer should then start on beat three of measure 227 and play to the end of the passage. The performer should play through each section several times before adding the next grouping, which is indicated by an eighth rest in Example 5.16, until the entire passage is mastered.

Double tonguing is required and should be used at the onset of practicing this passage. Some helpful exercises to supplement ones practice of the final

passage are the *High Register Etudes* from Plog's *Method for Trumpet, Book Six* and *Des Différentes Articulations Du Staccato* from Charlier's *36 Études Transcendantes*.

Example 5.16: Concerto no. 2, mvmt. 4, Solo Trumpet, mm. 220 – 231

The image displays a musical score for Solo Trumpet, measures 220 through 231. The score is written in a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music consists of a series of sixteenth-note patterns, often grouped in pairs or fours, with various dynamic markings and articulations. The dynamics alternate between fortissimo (ff) and piano (p). The articulation includes accents and slurs. The measures are numbered 222, 225, 228, and 231. The final measure (231) shows a sequence of sixteenth notes followed by a rest.

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CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

Both Concerto no. 1 and Concerto no. 2 are significant works in the extant trumpet literature. Each work presents its own challenges – Concerto no. 1 represents the virtuosic capabilities of the individual player and the instrument, while Concerto no. 2 explores the expressive aspects of the individual player and the instrument. Upon comparing the two concertos, several stylistic characteristics of Plog are revealed.

Many of the difficulties attributed to Plog's music can be broken down into motivic units that are related to the opening theme. Identifying the structural elements in the opening theme, as outlined in this project, will help the soloist navigate through the difficulties of each concerto. The structural elements presented in the opening theme appear throughout the movements. The odd finger patterns typically outline a weaving octatonic pattern or a chromatic scale. Above all, the concept of musicality should remain at the forefront of the performer's mind because the music is the most important aspect to Plog as a composer, despite the technical brevity of the music.

APPENDIX
TRANSCRIPTS OF INTERVIEWS

Anthony Plog

1) What was your compositional process for Concerto no. 1 and Concerto no. 2? Did you follow any models or forms? Comment on the treatment of thematic material for the solo trumpet in each concerto.

Concerto no. 1: It was much earlier in my writing career when I worked on the concerto. I do remember that I was pressed for time.

- April 16, 2011

Concerto no. 2: When I wrote the piece, I did not have a formal structure in mind. Part of this was by design and part can be attributed to the fact that I never studied composition. So for me the process of structure is far more intuitive than it would be for a formally trained or schooled composer. With that in mind I do believe that form and structure are important in my works (or at least I hope so). This may be more of an emotional sense of how a line or a movement or a piece develops, but structure is very much on my mind. However, instead of the concept of doing what is formally correct, what is important for me is if a line or movement or piece “works” in terms of both form and ideas. So, as an example, the opening theme serves as a unifying factor.

- November 27, 2008

In a separate e-mail communication, Plog offers an in-depth look at a particular section. Plog’s comments are presented here:

Although I cannot remember exactly what was going through my mind when I wrote particular sections, I do believe that the 6/16 section was definitely based on the opening minor seventh-chord played by the trumpet in bar 3 (but leaving out the seventh). I tend to be the type of composer who will write or sketch out the entire movement and then fill in the orchestration. What I do not do is write some themes and then think, ok, here is theme one so how can I use and develop this theme within whatever kind of formal structure. Rather, I will write and develop a theme as well as I can and then at a certain point move to another theme. I do remember that in the case of the Trumpet Concerto I had been writing a number of pieces that had very fast movements and in the case of the concerto I wanted to begin with a tempo that was more moderato than allegro (or vivace). And this (opening) theme came to mind. The opening triplet is of course the same triplet used by Mahler in his 3rd symphony, but I do not think I had that in mind when I wrote the opening to the piece. And when I wrote this opening I do not think I used it because I thought I could use it as a basis for other melodic content. I never write a theme with that sort of thinking, but I also think that I

assume that any theme will have elements that can be used later. When I do use elements of one theme in another theme I do think that this does help as a unifying device, and of course when the opening theme comes back at the end of the piece then it brings the whole piece together.

- March 16, 2010

2) Did you consider any specific technical and/or musical challenges for the performer to provide a dimension to these compositions?

Concerto no. 1: I was to write a piece that Doc would later record. So when I originally wrote the piece I wrote it with him in mind, and there are some high note passages which I later revised after he was off the project (but some of these passages are still in the George Vosburg recording of the work).

- May 1, 2011

Concerto no. 2: No, not really. I think for me the most important thing is that the technique of either playing or writing should be subservient to the musical or philosophical aspect of either the playing or writing. For example, I can hear a player doing incredible things on the instrument and be very impressed, but if the only reason for the technique is to impress an audience then I lose interest very quickly. But if the player uses his/her technique to get to the underlying meaning of a piece then I find that much more interesting. And in the case of the Concerto, the third movement is quite technical, but it serves to separate the heaviness of the second movement from the fourth movement (which is the longest of the four movements). Although the second movement of the Hindemith Trumpet Sonata is not all that technical it also serves the purpose of giving some relief from the outer movements.

- December 14, 2010

3) Did you have any particular idea, like an overall idea, that you wanted to create or convey in each trumpet concerto?

Concerto no. 1: It was much earlier in my writing career when I worked on the Concerto #1, so I am not really sure that I had a specific aim in writing the concerto. I do remember that I was pressed for time.

- April 16, 2011

Concerto no. 2: My idea behind the concerto is that so much of the repertoire for trumpet (and brass instruments in general) is not very substantial in terms of depth. Our repertoire usually tends to concentrate on technical brilliance, showing what the instrument can do, or providing a challenge for the performer. My intention and hope with this piece was to write a piece that was deep and meaningful. And if I failed in that quest, I wanted to feel that at least I tried.

- November 27, 2008

In a separate e-mail communication about Concerto no. 2, Plog states the following:

After it was premiered, I realized that I was capable of doing something that at least to me was truly good work (I remember being in Basel, Switzerland for a rehearsal and thinking that I had finally written something of which I could truly be proud after I had heard a recording of the premier). This of course would give me confidence to try to tackle more serious or difficult projects in the future (such as operas).

- April 16, 2011

4) You state that you wanted to write a “substantial” work for Concerto no. 2 specifically. What is your definition of a “substantial” work? Did this have any impact on the selection of musical material, or your approach to writing Concerto no. 2?

I guess substantial is rather difficult to define but for me it means a composition that is not about showing just what the instrument can do, but rather with a deeper subject matter. I love to read, and I would imagine that the thing about great writing as opposed to entertainment writing is that, while reading a book for entertainment can be fun and a fast read, a substantial book stays with the

reader for a much longer period of time, and perhaps even has an influence. If I think of composers like Mahler or Bach, I think they have this quality – their music reaches a great many people on both an emotional and also an intellectual level.

- December 14, 2010

Further comments on the idea of a “substantial” work:

As a trumpet player I have pretty much always rebelled against the normal, prevailing trumpet mentality, which has to do with admiration for physical feats and the expense of a more philosophical approach to music making. When considering other instruments, such as strings or piano, one aspect of becoming an accomplished player is to have an understanding of the music and its deeper meaning, or at least attempt to understand a deeper meaning. This very rarely happens with trumpet players. So when I write a concerto, I think that this philosophy is in the back of my mind, and in the case of the Trumpet Concerto I didn't want to write just another trumpet jock piece.

- December 6, 2008

5) In December 1989, you came to the realization that you had to be a composer instead of a performer. Can you elaborate on your decision to pursue composition full-time?

I think that for a long time I have felt that being a player was “outer” oriented, meaning having great friends through music, being involved in some great concerts, traveling around the world having new experiences, etc. And composition was “inner” oriented, meaning that it is done alone, involves trying to expand ones limited boundaries, both in terms of knowledge and philosophy or emotion. I've always loved to read, which is “inner” oriented, and I think this love of trying to learn probably had something to do with it. I guess I felt that I had basically reached as far as I could as a player (in other words, I wasn't sure that I could improve upon my limitations because they were technically oriented) but that I didn't know how deep I could go as a composer. I guess I always felt that a composer leaves more of a mark than a player.

- March 25, 2009

6) With regards to a philosophy that you describe for Concerto no. 2 specifically, could your philosophy be attributed, in any way, to your use of the Lutheran Chorale *Alle Menschen müssen sterben*?

Regarding the idea of a philosophy of the concerto I would say that I'm not sure that I can give you a specific idea about my philosophy of the piece as a whole. But my intention was to write a work that would have substance and depth. The original chorale *Alle Menschen* was originally in 2, not 3 as Hindemith used it, and uses traditional harmony (and this is the harmony I use in the second movement). This original chorale is actually a resurrection chorale (all men must die, which eventually leads to life after death), and I find the original harmony beautiful. My intention in using this was to use it as a contrasting theme (and tonality) from the preceding theme, which is an innocent sounding triplet passage. So I wanted to contrast the beauty and innocence of life with the ultimate tragedy that we must all face. Before I wrote the concerto a grandfatherly person died on our street and I remember being outside with some of the grieving parents while at the same time young children were playing on the street. And I think that is the general feeling I was trying to portray in that section of the piece. And although I do not have a specific program in mind, the trumpet fanfares (and the horn fanfares at the end of the movement) to me seem almost like either a war fanfare or a fanfare of death.

- February 8, 2009

7) How did you come up with a "brass series"? Did the commission of Concerto no. 2 create a spark to write a collection of pieces for brass instruments?

I think that I wrote the concerto before conceiving the idea of doing a brass series, but I'm not really sure about that. I do know that I wrote my Triple Concerto at the same time I was writing the Concerto #2, but just guessing now I would say that the idea of a brass series came later. When I came up with the idea of doing a brass series, my idea would be that the pieces would be somewhat different in nature: a Postcards, which would be for a solo brass instrument, a 3 Miniatures with piano, which would be more technical and perhaps a bit more quirky, a Lyrical Nocturne, and finally a Concerto, which would be the biggest and most substantial of the four pieces.

- March 25, 2009

David Hickman

1) Since the concerto was originally written for Doc Severinson, were there any changes made to the concerto to tailor the piece to you?

No, no changes. One would think that Plog would have written some very high passages for Doc, but he wrote what he wanted musically.

- April 26, 2011

2) How did you approach the numerous technical challenges in preparing for the premiere and recording?

I have my own system of practicing difficult passages. It involves playing through the entire piece numerous times to identify the places that require special attention. (My philosophy is that the most difficult 10% of the piece should get 90% of the practice time.) So, I photocopy each excerpt that needs lots of work. Excerpts are generally between two measures and two lines long. I place each excerpt on a separate page (I call them flashcards) and play each one many times per day. After I feel pretty good about them, I begin a scoring system where I play a particular excerpt ten times, marking down a score on a piece of graph paper. Scoring ranges from 1 to 10, 10 being absolutely perfect in sound AND feel. (My other philosophy is that if it doesn't feel good, it probably was not perfect even though it sounded good).

- April 26, 2011

3) Did Plog make any suggestions to you about the performance of his work? If so, what were those suggestions?

The only thing he talked to me about was that the opening offstage solo was to depict a Baroque (natural) trumpet bending notes to play a melody. He sort of wanted certain notes to be out of tune (like the harmonic series), but I tried to play all notes in tune because I didn't think that most audience members would know what the unaltered natural harmonic series should sound like. I figured people would simply think I had lousy intonation.

- April 26, 2011

Nick Norton

1) Were there technical and/or musical features in Concerto no. 2 that Plog deliberately used to showcase your strengths as a virtuoso?

He writes in this piece a little bit of everything. I do think there are some lyrical chances that you can have some nice lyrical playing. But there are also a lot of multiple tonguing sections too. So I'm not sure. I think, overall, that it is a well-rounded piece. For me, the piece is a huge undertaking, and it stresses me big time. But on the other hand, I don't think the piece doesn't require the performer to do anything idiomatic or anything. As for me, I think it can be played by anyone. You don't need to be anyone like Allen Vizzutti or Doc Severinson, or somebody with unbelievable chops. Personally, I am just a normal trumpet player. But I do think that he writes a little more lyrical sections, possibly for me....maybe.

- February 28, 2010

2) Did you communicate with Plog during the compositional process? If so, what was the nature of that communication?

Tony and I are good friends, and we talk a lot. I would tell Tony about sections of the piece that, to me, seemed uncomfortable. He said to me that every change usually means that if something was uncomfortable, then he didn't write it where it maybe should be; any changes made would make it a better and stronger piece. And I think he really truly believes that with the few small changes we made.

- December 12, 2010

3) Did you make any technical or musical suggestions that were employed by Plog?

I did tell him that I wish it wasn't so hard. There was nothing endurance related that was changed. There was one thing he did specifically for me in the second movement. It was a small thing, but it helped. In the second movement, in bar 49, he has a triplet pick-up. That pick-up, I asked him to give me that runway there for that lick. I just didn't feel very comfortable five bars before that with all of those trumpet calls, and then coming in with that melody at bar 50. I told him I could play that, but I'm not going to guarantee that. So those five pick-up notes were for me. He said that it was an improvement to the piece.

There was another thing that he did for me. At the end of the first movement, at measure 177, he originally had G quarter note followed by four sixteenth notes Bb-G-Bb-G on beat two, followed by Eb to D in quarter notes. He changed that to what is seen in the published version. I didn't like executing those two bars in that section. Those two sections were totally for me.

- February 28, 2010

4) Is there anything that you think would be helpful to a person preparing Concerto no. 2 for a recital or with an orchestra?

As a member of the Orchestra, I was used to playing the regular literature, like the Haydn and Hummel concertos with orchestra, the Arutunian, and the Vivaldi Double Concerto, all of which are readily accessible. To me, not hearing this piece was the main challenge for me. I had a friend in the orchestra create computer generated parts of the orchestra for me to play along to. It really helped to play along with. Now [John Holt] has a recording of the work that you can listen to. So I would say listen to that to get the piece in your ear.

One thing that I do think helped me specifically was measure 93 in the first movement where it starts in mixed meter. My division in my head I did instead of what he wrote was I did three notes, three notes in the 6/16 bar, just like it says. Then I thought a duple (two notes). And then the rest of that 4/8 bar, I did three notes, and three notes. That helped me hang it together. To me, it seemed less awkward to think of that way.

- February 28, 2010

John Holt

1) What suggestions would you offer to trumpet players who are preparing the work for performance?

One must practice the difficult passages very slowly for a prolonged period of time building endurance as well as technique.

- February 11, 2011

2) Were there any musical or technical changes that you and/or the composer made to the score in the process of the recording?

Just corrected one wrong note in the last movement. If you listen to the last movement carefully, you will hear a 4th space E flat that is written as an E natural in the music (2nd page of the trumpet part in the first line I think).

- February 11, 2011

3) Did you correspond with Plog over any of the aspects for Concerto no. 2? If so, did he make any suggestions that are not clearly marked in the part?

No, he came to the recording session in Bratislava and pretty much just listened and made some musical suggestions at times. However, because it was such a difficult piece for the orchestra, there was little time for much dialogue. It took 24 hours to record.

- February 11, 2011

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