

**DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS
OF THE BRASS MUSIC OF ANTHONY PLOG
AND THEIR APPLICATION IN PERFORMANCE**

by

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the defining characteristics in Anthony Plog's brass music. Plog's treatment of motive, delivery of musical expectation, and timbre creates music that is idiomatic for brass performers. While the information herein is intended to be informative for all brass musicians, Plog's writing for the trumpet is particularly examined to illuminate the technical and artistic demands on trumpet players. Lauding the composer's techniques, the dissertation may also be useful for composers interested in effective writing for brass musicians, especially in a chamber music setting.

Myriad examples from Mr. Plog's brass chamber repertoire demonstrate why his techniques yield outstanding compositions for brass. The cited works are *Concerto No. 1 for Trumpet and Brass Ensemble* (1988) for soloist and 16-member ensemble, *Four Sketches* (1990) for brass quintet, *Postcards* (1994) for solo trumpet, and *Trio for Brass* (1996) for flugelhorn, horn, and trombone. Commentary by Mr. Plog and noted trumpet performers of his works Nick Norton, Gabriele Cassone, Allan Dean, and David Hickman contribute to the understanding of the composer's defining characteristics.

With a refreshing approach to new music for brass, composer Tony Plog's brass compositions are frequently programmed and have become staple works in the brass repertoire. Emphasizing the effectiveness of his approach to brass composition, it is the hope that this dissertation proves useful in preparing both extant and future brass works by Anthony Plog.

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1 Introduction

Tony Plog is a frequently mentioned composer among brass players. From personal experience in various brass ensembles during the last decade, when choosing repertoire for brass recitals the discussions do not touch on *if* a Plog work will be programmed, but rather *which one?* The defining characteristics of Plog's brass music are distinctive and engaging. Technical and lyrical playing are inherent in Plog's writing for the trumpet, and this approach extends to the entire brass family, resulting in a distinct voice through particular thematic, rhythmic, tonal, and timbral ideas that are often idiomatic to brass. As a former performing trumpet player and brass chamber musician, Mr. Plog's compositions reflect his intimate knowledge of the capabilities and limits of brass instruments. Though Plog himself modestly suggests that his music's appeal for performers stems from brass music having a comparatively "weaker" repertoire,¹ his brass chamber works continue the tradition of originality established by other 20th-Century brass chamber composers including Ingolf Dahl, Malcolm Arnold, Eugene Bozza, and Plog's contemporary Jan Bach.

Ensembles such as Summit Brass, GECA Brass Ensemble, the American Brass Quintet, the St. Louis Brass Quintet, and top brass performers such as tubist Daniel Perantoni, hornist Gail Williams, and trumpeters James Thompson, David Hickman, George Vosburgh, and Nick Norton have confirmed the importance of Plog's music through myriad commissions, performances, and recordings.² Plog received a grant from the United States' National Endowment for the Arts to compose *Mosaics* for the

¹ Appendix D, Question 16

² See Appendices B and C for repertoire listing and performance records.

American Brass Quintet; and the Malmo Symphony, National Repertory Orchestra (US), Branimir Slokar International Trombone Competition, and the Guebwiller International Competition for Tuba have each commissioned Plog. The educational prevalence of Plog's brass chamber music is also evident: in addition to professional concerts and recordings, students of conservatories and universities at the Glenn Gould School, University of Toronto, University of Calgary, University of Victoria, and here at the University of British Columbia prepare and present his music on a regular basis.³

1.1 Performance Background

Born in 1947 in California, composer Anthony Clifton Plog⁴ began his music career as a trumpet player in the Los Angeles vicinity in the mid 1960s. He quickly became a renowned orchestral trumpet player, performing as Principal Trumpet with ensembles such as the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, the Malmo Symphony in Sweden, the Stockholm Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in Sweden, and the Basel Symphony in Switzerland. Plog also maintained an extensive brass chamber music career, most notably with the Fine Arts Brass Quintet and the St. Louis Brass Quintet. In 1993 he was appointed Professor of Trumpet at the *Staatliche Hochschule für Musik Freiburg im Breisgau* in Germany.

As his performance career continued to develop in the late 1960s, Mr. Plog began composing. His own Fine Arts Brass Quintet premiered his first published work from 1970, *Mini Suite for Brass Quintet*. Plog's early compositions always included brass

³ See Appendix C for performance records

⁴ Appendix D, Question 2: His surname 'Plog' is pronounced with a long 'o:' "Plog as in toad, not Plog as in frog!" He believes the name to be of German origin.

(and more often than not still do), but since the 1980s his compositions call for increasingly diverse and larger ensembles. Plog withdrew from trumpet performance in 2001 in order to fully dedicate himself to composing, and though never formally trained as a composer now has close to one hundred published works available.⁵

1.2 Influences & Composition Philosophy

With Plog's father and older brother being trombone players, brass playing was present in his life from early on. Focusing primarily on his trumpet playing for many years, the move from performer to composer was quite gradual. Plog recalls his resolution to pursue composition:

My decision really took a long time, and began with a concert I heard in December 1989 in Berlin (Prokofieff *Romeo and Juliet*, the ballet) that made me realize I had to become a composer, or at least try to become a composer. That concert set things in motion, and it took over ten years to finally pull the plug.⁶

Yet, Plog states that his influences as a composer are primarily based in his experiences playing trumpet:

...I think I probably view composers as much from the viewpoint of an orchestral trumpet player as a composer. So I would basically list all the standard composers [as influential], from Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, to Mahler, Tchaikowsky, Stravinsky, [and] Prokofieff.⁷

⁵ See Appendix A for repertoire listing

⁶ Appendix D, Question 7

⁷ Appendix D, Question 5

Plog notes that he is “drawn to certain things in Stravinsky, Prokofieff, and perhaps... Shostakovich,”⁸ and that,

There are a lot of great 20th-Century composers whose work tends to be very rhythmic (Stravinsky, Prokofieff, Britten, Copland, etc.) and I would think that in a certain way all of those (and other) composers have influenced me, if not directly then at least indirectly.⁹

Plog’s mention of composers whose works are rhythmic is important because of the notable rhythmic thumbprint found in his own compositions (Plog’s rhythm is specifically examined with regard to musical expectations in Chapter 3). Though Plog’s professional mastery of orchestral trumpet music and participation in performances of works by the named composers likely influenced his idiomatic approach to brass composition, he emphasizes that he does not intentionally emulate any composer.¹⁰

Plog’s approach to composing is strongly influenced by his background as a performer, so his intimate knowledge of the instruments’ capabilities adds to the appeal for performers. Plog writes,

In a way, I do write for the strengths of specific players, but I am always thinking that I would like the piece to be played by as many players as possible (if the piece is deserving of further performances), so I am not the type of composer who will write something that only an all-star player can play.¹¹

⁸ Appendix D, Question 5

⁹ Appendix D, Question 12

¹⁰ Appendix D, Question 5; further, Question 13

¹¹ Appendix D, Question 16

Plog notes that he “never really enjoyed playing” his own music,¹² indicating a division between ‘Plog the performer’ and ‘Plog the composer.’ The division provides insight about score indications versus the amount of interpretation required from a performer. Plog states,

I don't think I approached any of my music differently than any other music, but I do think that being a composer made me a better interpreter of other pieces, meaning that I would try to approach things much more from the composer's point of view...¹³

The specific directions in Plog's scores are significant, calling for avoidance of vague interpretation. For example, when asked about the desired result of fast, many-note phrases, Plog responded, “my idea was that the runs should be as clear as possible, rather than just an effect.”¹⁴ In other words, technical lines are not contoured gestures; they must be executed with precision.

The composer also discusses his intent with dynamic markings. He cites his composition *Postcards*, in which his dynamics should be literal.

I heard *Postcards* a number of years ago at an international competition in Toulon, France. The last movement has a number of passages that are marked *pp*. Perhaps that dynamic is not really possible, considering the context of the passages, but even so the softest dynamic I heard for those passages was *mf*.¹⁵

¹² Appendix D, Question 6

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Appendix D, Question 24

¹⁵ Appendix D, Question 16

In addition to dictating volume, a dynamic marking may also intend to establish the atmosphere of a section of music. Plog humbly notes,

I do find that with some works I am not specific enough with my notation... For example, when I wrote the first movement of the *Four Sketches* and for certain passages wrote a *f* dynamic I just naturally assumed that *f* would be taken with a grain of salt, meaning that the overall feel of the movement should be light and compact. But I have heard a lot of interpretations where *f* is played in a very loud and aggressive manner, which to me means that I should have either written *mf* or perhaps [instead] *f*, but lightly played.¹⁶

Mr. Plog comments that he keeps in mind his music's accessibility for the performers and audience, composing with the hope that his music will be "heard (and hopefully played!)."¹⁷ He gives an example of his consideration for audience by mentioning a composition he is currently writing: an opera with a holocaust-themed subject matter.

I think this will be a difficult piece for the audience. But I am still writing this piece for the audience, just like an author writes a book with the intention or hope that it will be read... I tend to write in a much more conservative manner than most of the composers who are being performed by major orchestras these days, but an awful lot of this music is performed once and then forgotten.¹⁸

The composer desires his music be remembered, not "performed once and then forgotten." Plog considers the needs of his performers and listeners alike.

¹⁶ Appendix D, Question 21

¹⁷ Appendix D, Question 8

¹⁸ Appendix D, Question 8 and further, Question 9

1.3 Prolific Brass Composer

Tony Plog's brass works dating from the early 1970s to the present are thus far his most prominent compositions. The early and popular composition *Animal Ditties* for trumpet, piano, and narrator is frequently programmed on trumpet recitals, and Plog has written brass chamber music works that are now considered staples in the brass repertoire, including *Music for Brass Octet* for four trumpets and four trombones, and *Four Sketches* and *Mosaics* for brass quintet.¹⁹ Some of his compositions, such as *Postcards* for solo trumpet, have been developed from an original work into publications for other brass (such as with *Postcards* with versions for solo horn, trombone, and bass trombone as well).²⁰ Plog's ensembles are often diverse, sometimes calling for collaboration between brass players and narrator, organ, or small string orchestra.²¹

As a trumpet player himself, Plog often features the trumpet in his compositions. Such works include *Animal Ditties I* and *II* (1978 and 1983 respectively), *Four Themes on Paintings of Edvard Munch* (1985), the *Concerto No. 1 for Trumpet & Brass Ensemble* (1988), *Concerto No. 2 for Trumpet and Orchestra* (1994), *Concertino for Trumpet and Trombone* (1999), *Double Concerto for Two Trumpets* (2002), and the *Sonata for Trumpet and Piano* (2009). He has written and recorded works for trumpet ensemble, such as his *Suite for Six Trumpets* (1980) and *Fanfare MT* (1995). In addition to his professorship in Germany, Plog has established himself as an important trumpet pedagogue by publishing *Method for Trumpet, Books 1-7* (2003-2010), along with *10 Concert Duets for Trumpet* (1980) and *Études and Duets for Trumpet* (1993).

¹⁹ See Appendix C for performance records

²⁰ See Appendix A for repertoire listing

²¹ Ibid

1.4 Selected Works

This dissertation informs brass performers and composers about the defining characteristics of Plog's brass chamber music. The characteristics examined are: 1) the use of motive in scale-, mode-, and arpeggio-based phrases; 2) unpredictable pulse and rhythmic displacement; 3) timbral effects from hocket-like and *Klangfarbenmelodie*-influenced orchestration and dissonance. Four works published between 1988 and 1996 provide quintessential examples of these defining characteristics: 1) *Postcards* for solo trumpet; 2) *Trio for Brass* for flugelhorn, horn, and trombone; 3) *Four Sketches* for brass quintet; and 4) *Concerto No. 1 for Trumpet and Brass Ensemble*.

Postcards, from 1994, is a solo trumpet work written for the virtuoso Italian trumpeter Gabriele Cassone. The work is in three short movements, *Moderato*, *Adagio*, and *Moderato*. Thematic material manifests as concise rhythmic or intervallic motives, making the start and end of phrases easy to discern despite the fact that there is no indicated meter and that phrases vary greatly in length. Single-pitched ostinati, when juxtaposed against moving phrases, create phrases of contrast. The second movement employs a cup mute for color, and intervallic motives provide thematic fusion. The final movement is somewhat chaotic, extending the sense of unpredictability already established in the previous movements.

Published in 1996, the faculty brass trio at the University of Illinois at Carbondale commissioned Plog's *Trio for Brass*. The composition is a two-part work with three consecutive movements in Part I, and two more consecutive movements in Part II. Plog includes cadenzas for each instrument, during which the other two are able to recover from the demands of the immediately preceding section. The movements alternate

between rhythmic and lyrical melodies while maintaining a sense of dissonance most of the time. This work is one of only a handful of published substantial brass trio works.

The St. Louis Brass Quintet commissioned the 1990 *Four Sketches*. It has become one of Plog's most popular compositions.²² The instrumentation calls for two C trumpet performers of equal playing ability, and for tuba as opposed to bass trombone. The four-movement work has sections of ensemble playing written for only three players, but the lines are often distributed among the quintet members to ease endurance demands and highlight the timbre of the instruments. The fast movements are "energetic."²³ The *Andante* third movement is mellow but also is at times texturally dense and quite loud. Rhythmic groove and dissonance are again particularly prominent in this work.

Summit Brass with trumpeter David Hickman premiered the 1988 *Concerto No. 1 for Trumpet and Brass Ensemble* for trumpet soloist, 14-member brass section, and 2-member percussion section. The *Concerto* features not only the soloist performer, but also a variety of sounds the solo instrument itself is capable of producing. The work is in four movements – again, three fast and one slow – and contains metric shifts, dissonance, and consonance while maintaining fairly traditional tonal concepts when related to form. The solo trumpet part is demanding in dexterity, register, and rhythm, and is most often independent of the accompanying ensemble's music. The *Concerto No. 1* has since been adapted for solo trumpet with wind ensemble, premiered in 2008 by James Thompson with the University of Toronto Wind Ensemble.

Conclusions about the information collected and analyzed may be applied to passages in other Plog compositions. A comprehensive list of Plog's works for brass

²² See Appendix B for discography and Appendix C for performance listing

²³ Appendix D, Question 19

comprises Appendix A; a discography of brass works comprises Appendix B; a sampling of the countless performances of Plog's brass music comprises Appendix C; and the complete correspondence with Mr. Plog comprises Appendix D.

Plog's music is highly expressive and full of depth and character. The defining characteristics examined in the following chapters explain the captivating nature of his music.

2 Melodic Dissection: Motives

Melody in much of Plog's brass chamber music appears quite technically challenging, but content becomes more approachable for a performer when the intricate motivic structures are identified and understood. Dissecting melody into its motivic elements is necessary for maintaining comprehension of the thematic materials throughout a composition, and thus increases the success of a performance. This chapter specifically examines motives in Plog's trumpet and flugelhorn writing from select brass chamber works.

Plog's motives occur in limited number in each of his brass chamber works, and can be easily identified and isolated for practicing and mastering. Figure 2.1 shows a melody in the flugelhorn in the first movement of the *Trio for Brass* where a motive is established by the pitches' intervallic relationship. The motive is comprised of four pitches, with three of the four related by a descending major 2nd and rising minor 2nd interval and preceded by either a rising or descending minor 2nd interval. The motive appears twice in the Figure 2.1, with the second occurrence a major 3rd (or diminished 4th) lower than the first (two interval sets of $\langle 1, 2, 1 \rangle$, in total $\langle 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, 1 \rangle$). Figure 2.2 shows an excerpt containing two more examples of this motive, with the second occurrence now a major 3rd higher than the first (two interval sets of $\langle 1, 2, 1 \rangle$, in total $\langle 1, 2, 1, 4, 1, 2, 1 \rangle$). In both 2.1 and 2.2, a melodic idea is formed as an extension of the two subsequent occurrences of the intervallic motive.

Figure 2.1 - *Trio for Brass, I. Allegro Vivace*, m. 1-2

Trio for Brass I - Motivic Intervals 1

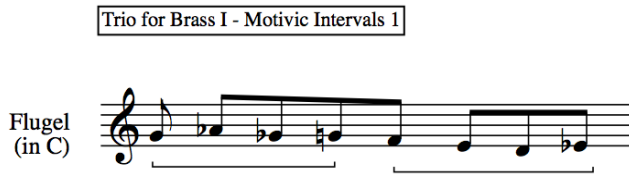
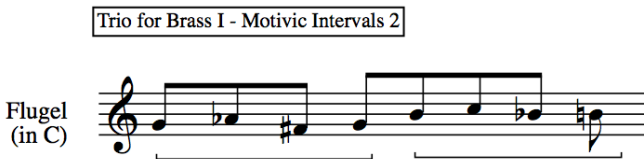


Figure 2.2 - *Trio for Brass, I. Allegro Vivace*, m. 3-4

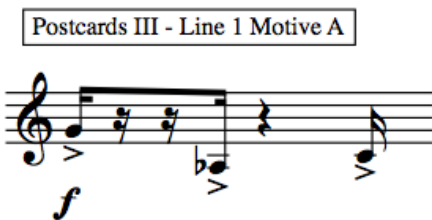
Trio for Brass I - Motivic Intervals 2



Similarly, the melody in *III. Moderato* of *Postcards* is created from three motives. Figure 2.3 shows three 16th notes and three different pitches related by major 7th and major 3rd intervals respectively (or $\langle 1, 4 \rangle$), with the first and third pitch also forming a perfect 5th interval. These three 16th notes, called here Motive A, have accent marks at a *forte* dynamic.

Figure 2.3 - *Postcards, III. Moderato*, line 1

Postcards III - Line 1 Motive A



A second motive, called Motive B and shown in Figure 2.4, immediately follows Motive A. Other than again being comprised of three 16th notes, this motive is quite different from the first in that it is given a *piano* dynamic indication, is slurred instead of

articulated with accents, and contains minor 2nd intervals. A short descending phrase — an extension of Motive B — immediately follows.

Figure 2.4 - *Postcards, III. Moderato, line 1*



The intervals of the three 16th notes in the example in Figure 2.5, called Motive C, are adapted from Motive A since Motive C also contains perfect 5th and minor 2nd intervals. The first and third pitches also form an augmented 5th (or minor 6th) interval. In Motive C, the minor 2nd and minor 6th intervals are inversions of the major 7th and major 3rd intervals from Motive A, and share in common the perfect 5th interval. In other words, Motive C is a reordered version of Motive A: {G, A \flat , C} and {B \flat , B, E \flat } are $\langle 0, 1, 5 \rangle$, though {E \flat , B \flat , B} is not left packed. Regardless of this relationship, Motive C is identified as a new third motive because it contains elements of both Motives A and B: though marked *forte* as is Motive A, the notes are slurred as in Motive B. Figure 2.6 shows Motives A, B, and C reassembled into their original phrase.

Figure 2.5 - *Postcards, III. Moderato, line 1*

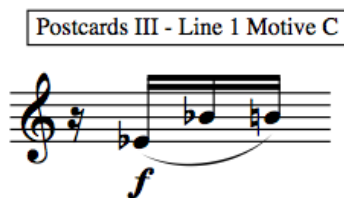
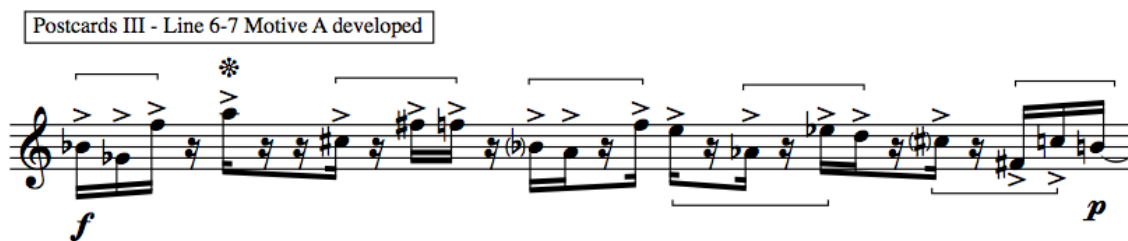


Figure 2.6 - *Postcards, III. Moderato*, line 1



While such combining of motives to form melody is typical in Plog's brass works, so is the manipulation of a single motive to form melody. Figure 2.7 shows a phrase developed only from Motive A, and though the exact rhythm is altered, the interspersed notes and rests maintain the sporadic rhythmic gesture. The phrase is based on the intervals and their inversions and retrogrades of the original motive; for example, the first three pitches are reordered: {B \flat , G \flat , F} is $\langle 1, 4 \rangle$. The fourth pitch, A, the pinnacle of the line and starred in Figure 2.7, is the single pitch in this phrase that does not comply with the $\langle 1, 4 \rangle$ set.

Figure 2.7 - *Postcards, III. Moderato*, lines 6-7



Similar extension of Motive C is shown in Figure 2.8. The first three 16th notes (B, E, and E \flat) are simply a transposed inversion of the original interval set of Motive C. After a quick appearance of Motive B in its extended state, the remainder of the passage is Motive C developed through additional transposed versions and metric shifting.

Figure 2.8 - *Postcards, III. Moderato*, lines 4-5

Postcards III - Line 4-5 Motive B & C developed



Isolating motives is a useful practice approach for such melodic lines. Figure 2.9 shows Motive C from lines 4 and 5 of the third movement from *Postcards* (Figure 2.8) reformed into an exercise developed to specifically practice this melody and highlight the relationships between each occurrence of the motive.

Figure 2.9 - *Postcards, III. Moderato*, lines 4-5 Exercise

Postcards III - Line 4-5 Motive C Exercise



The first two lines, designed to keep the pitches of the motive in closest proximity to each other, eliminate ascending octave jumps. The repetition of the motive in closer-related intervals promotes better aural recognition and confidence in accuracy. The pitches in

the last two lines return to their original octave placement, with their return bridging the difficult larger interval while still maintaining the relationship between the instances of the motives. The fourth and eighth measures reflect the rhythmic shifting of Motive C in lines 4 and 5. The isolation and repetition of the motives can help a performer successfully manage this and similar difficult technical passages while highlighting the construction of melody.

Ostinati from repeated intervals and rhythms also comprise motives in Plog's music. Figure 2.10 shows an ostinato motive from the third movement *Allegro* from *Concerto No. 1*. Found in every measure of the movement as it is passed around from player to player, the construction of this motive is evident when the pitches are reshuffled into the sequence shown in the Figure 2.11. The measures in Figure 2.11 can help a player improve interval accuracy and intonation, and help identify tonal implications (which are examined in Chapter 3) that illuminate overall thematic ideas.

Figure 2.10 - *Concerto No. 1, III. Allegro, m. 1*



Figure 2.11 - *Concerto No. 1, III. Allegro, m. 1 Exercise*



Figure 2.12 - *Postcards, I. Moderato*, lines 1-2



Another recurring ostinato motive is found as a group of *staccato*-articulated G-pitched 8th notes interspersed with 16th note triplets, found in *I. Moderato* of *Postcards* (Figure 2.12 above). As in this example, ostinato motives especially require consistent articulation from note to note and throughout the ensemble. Professor Allan Dean comments that faster tempi can dictate articulation, stating, “...[Plog’s] fast movements seem to almost always want short notes. Most are fast enough that one doesn’t have a real choice and they end up sounding *staccato*, no matter what one tries.”²⁴ The ostinati in Figures 2.10 and in 2.12 are such examples with the 8th notes sounding short due to the *Allegro* and *Moderato* tempi. However, a potential danger lies in approaching fast notes as “short.” From personal experience, the concept of playing short is sometimes mistakenly associated with inconsistent air release, and short notes become percussive instead of simply sounding detached but with full tone. A performer may find *fp* articulation, demonstrated in Figure 2.13, to be an effective alternative approach. Since *fp* articulation requires an airflow that decays but does not entirely cease, this articulation produces short *sounding* notes instead of *short* notes. Proper use of air is not sacrificed for the sake of *staccato* articulation. The *f* dynamic and slurs on the triplet and sextuplet also promote consistent use of air by the player.

²⁴ Dean, Allan. Email to Al Cannon, 17 September 2011

Figure 2.13 - *Postcards, I. Moderato*, lines 1-2 Exercise

Postcards I - Line 1-2 Exercise

fpfpfpfpfp f ³ *fpfpfp f* ⁶ *fp fp fp fp fp*

Arpeggios are another source for motive development in Plog's brass music.

Line 4 of the first movement of *Postcards*, shown in Figure 2.14, is an extension of the G minor chord first introduced in Line 1 (Figure 2.12). The G minor chord expands into G minor-major ninth and eleventh chords, with the ostinato returning in between. Figure 2.15 shows minor and major triadic chords interspersed with the ostinato motive.

Figure 2.14 - *Postcards, I. Moderato*, line 4

Postcards I - Line 4

mf *f mf f mf f*

Figure 2.15 - *Postcards, I. Moderato*, line 15-16

Postcards I - Line 15-16

mf *f mf f*

Similar to *Postcards*, Figure 2.16 shows motivic arpeggiated chords in the flugelhorn line from *V. Allegro Vivace* of the *Trio for Brass*. The flugelhorn's sequence of motivic major and minor chords, interspersed with rests, form the melody.

Figure 2.16 - *Trio for Brass, V. Allegro Vivace, m. 1-6*

Trio for Brass V - m. 1-6

Allegro vivace

Flugel (in C)
Horn (in C)
Trbn

Flugel (in C)
Horn (in C)
Trbn

With the widespread use of arpeggios in brass music, in part due to the fanfare tradition, the trumpeter should maintain familiarity and dexterity with such arpeggios. (Exercises for practicing arpeggiated chords are found in many technique books, perhaps most notably in the Third Study of HL Clarke's *Technical Studies for the Cornet*).

Vital for the successful preparation and performance of Plog's brass music, an overall understanding of Plog's thematic material ensues from an understanding of its motivic basis. Additionally, during preparation of any work, brass musicians must strategically consider endurance limitations. Brass musicians thrive when efficiency is inherent in melodic material. Despite the apparent technical challenges, when Plog's trumpet and flugelhorn melodies are broken down into their motivic framework there is a

relatively small amount of material to practice and prepare. Since there is not infinite practice time available to trumpet players due to potential muscle exhaustion, the performer can devote much time and depth to these few melodic ideas to produce an overall accurate and satisfying product.

3 Musical Expectation

Plog's brass chamber music is partially recognizable by the occurrence of unpredictable events and elements despite expectations implied by standard Western tonalities and straightforward rhythms. His works typically contain clear tonal centers and conventional rhythmic groupings and meters; however, the musical expectations implied by such conventional structures are evaded with surprise events and subtle alterations. The manipulation of expectation and surprise helps distinguish this composer and enhances the appeal of his music.

3.1 Tonal Center

New Grove Music Online discusses tonality as a component capable of defining musical expectation:

In its power to form musical goals and regulate the progress... towards moments of arrival, tonality has become, in Western culture, the principal musical means with which to manage expectation and structure desire.²⁵

Tonality in Plog's brass chamber music indeed helps to manage expectation. When asked how he approaches tonality in his brass chamber music, Plog explains his simple philosophy:

When I write I may think of a tonal center but... I don't think in perhaps the traditional terms of what particular scale I will use... usually my approach is that I simply use my ears and (hopefully) good sense to decide

²⁵ Brian Hyer. "Tonality," in *Oxford Music Online*. 12 Aug 2011. 1c, 1g, and 1h.

if something works in terms of tonality or key center... I basically do write with a key center in mind.²⁶

The presence of a particular chord or scale may suggest a key center (or tonal center), but lack of supporting harmonies prevents the establishment of traditional keys. Tonal center is instead established by emphasis on or repetition of a particular pitch.

In *Postcards' I. Moderato*, a clear tonal center is established in the first phrase. The pitch G is indicated as the pitch center by four returns to the ostinato pattern (Figure 2.12), twice from descending lines that delineate the G as an arrival point in the phrase. Noting the repetition of the pitch G, and despite the absence of a key signature, the G minor chord in the triplet 16th notes alludes to a G minor tonality. Further, in Line 4 of the movement (Figure 2.14) the G minor chord expands into G minor ninth and eleventh chords, with the G-pitched ostinato returning in between. Where the key of G minor requires certain relationships between multiple chords — not only tonic and dominant — here there is a focus on one pitch that is extended into variations of its chord.

The pitch G is clearly a tonal center, but lacks surrounding functional harmonies to be wholly labeled G minor. However, in Lines 5-6 (Figure 3.1) the pitch F#, the usual leading tone to any G tonal center, temporarily replaces the G in the ostinato.

²⁶ Appendix D, Question 13

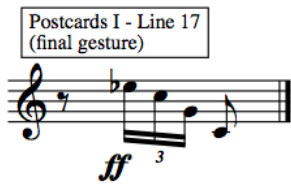
Figure 3.1 - *Postcards, I. Moderato*, lines 5-6



The 32nd notes now descend as a retrograded F minor-major ninth chord. Here, the pitch F has no functional relation to a G major or minor tonal center. In the recapitulation of the ostinato theme in Lines 15-16 (Figure 2.15), an A \flat temporarily replaces the G-pitched tonal center, and a C minor descending chord replaces the G minor ascending chord in the 16th note triplet. The phrase contains C minor, E major, and A \flat major chords, which are third related harmonies that are not functionally supportive of diatonic G minor. Then, the phrase does conclude with the pitch G prevailing as the tonal center again, which is maintained into Line 17. The tonal center of the theme starts in G, travels to F# and then A \flat , and concludes again with G. With the other occurrences of this ostinato-based phrase centered a half step below (F#) and above (A \flat) the G tonal center (the tonic), the F# and A \flat phrases representatively replace typical formal harmonies and contribute to the emphasis of G as a tonal center. This is typical treatment of tonal center in Plog's brass chamber works.

Due to the established formal conventions suggested by tonic and dominant relationships in Western music, the return to familiar material classifies the music's tonality as predictable. This is the case in *Postcards* until the final gesture shifts this movement's tonal center from G to C via a descending C minor chord (Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2 - *Postcards, I. Moderato*, line 17



The G tonal center endures through the movement when the C-pitched tonal center arrives at the last possible moment. The shift to C minor is abrupt and marked *fortissimo*, which tangents from the established tonal center G and renders the ending unpredictable. Yet, if considering standard tonal models and tonic and dominant relationships, the pitch G is the dominant of the pitch C. The G-focused entire movement could be interpreted as a dominant precursor to its tonic C in the final gesture. Regardless of the expectations from the plausible dominant-tonic relation, the brief C minor ending is unexpected.

Similar tonality-based techniques appear in other Plog works. In Figure 2.10 in the third movement *Allegro* from *Concerto No. 1*, another ostinato influences the perception of tonal center through repetition. Only once is the phrase transposed (measures 71-77 in the percussion); otherwise, the pitches are verbatim to the original pitches in every other measure of the movement. The fast tempo of the movement, constant repetition of the ostinato, and B \flat being the highest pitch in the contour of the ostinato all contribute to the aural reiteration of B \flat with each passing measure. With this reiteration, a tonal center of B \flat is perceived because the downbeat of each subsequent measure returns to the B \flat pitch.

The solo trumpet accompanies the ostinato in the third measure of the movement (Figure 3.3). Its melody contains the same pitches as the ostinato shown in Figure 2.10.

Figure 3.3 - Concerto No. 1, III. Allegro, m. 3-8

Concerto 1.3 m. 3-8
(transposed to C)

Solo B \flat Tpt. *p*



Considering the presence of the ostinato pitches, the phrase beginning and ending on the pitch B \flat , and the already apparent B \flat tonal center from the ostinato, this phrase indicates B \flat Dorian mode. However, the pitch B \flat is alternatively the dominant of an E \flat key in the first measure of Figure 3.3. E \flat Mixolydian mode is indicated instead, confirmed by the E \flat tonal center found many times in the movement including in measures 78-86 (Figure 3.4) and in the final measures, 98-102 (Figure 3.5).

Figure 3.4 - Concerto No. 1, III. Allegro, m. 78-86

Concerto 1.3 m. 78-86
(transposed to C)

Solo B \flat Tpt. *mf*



Figure 3.5 - Concerto No. 1, III. Allegro, m. 98-102

Concerto 1.3 m. 98-102
(transposed to C)

Solo B \flat Tpt. *p* *pp*



As with the ending of the first movement of *Postcards*, the tonal center established by the ostinato (B \flat) relates to the concluding tonal center as its dominant (E \flat). The B \flat and E \flat are both relevant pitch centers, but the ongoing tonal ambiguity (and the meter of this movement, discussed below) contributes to an environment of unpredictability. The

ending's arrival is quite abrupt, with the understated E \flat chord inhabiting the space of the final 8th note in a fast-paced tempo with all instruments marked *pianissimo*. The subtlety of the ending is sublime.

Figure 3.6 - *Four Sketches, IV. Allegro*, m. 127-130

The image displays a musical score for the fourth movement of *Four Sketches*, *Allegro*, measures 127-130. The score is arranged in two systems, each with five staves: C Tpt. 1, C Tpt. 2, Hn., Tbn., and Tuba. The first system (measures 127-130) features a key signature of one flat (B \flat). The C Tpt. 1 staff has a melodic line with a slur over measures 127-130. The C Tpt. 2 staff has a similar melodic line. The Hn. staff has a rhythmic accompaniment. The Tbn. and Tuba staves have a harmonic accompaniment. The second system (measures 131-134) features a key signature change to two flats (B \flat major). The C Tpt. 1 staff has a melodic line with a slur over measures 131-134. The C Tpt. 2 staff has a similar melodic line. The Hn. staff has a rhythmic accompaniment. The Tbn. and Tuba staves have a harmonic accompaniment. Annotations include "F phrygian" under the C Tpt. 2 staff in the first system and "Bb whole tone" under the C Tpt. 2 staff in the second system. The text "Bb Major Triad" is located at the bottom right of the second system.

The fourth movement *Allegro* from *Four Sketches* is yet another example of a movement-long tonal center (F) that is related to the final tonal center (B \flat) as its dominant, indicated in Figure 3.6 by the concluding B \flat major chord. In the immediately

preceding measures the F Phrygian mode in the horn emphasizes a tonal center around the pitch F. The B \flat major chord is a sudden arrival from the rather cacophonous tonal materials and driving rhythms. Again, the terse tonal conclusion is surprising.

Plog sometimes writes entirely discernable tonal centers but slightly alters surrounding harmonies and hence influences tonal expectations. Such an example is in the first movement of the *Concerto*, shown in Figure 3.7. The pitches in Horn 4 and Trombone 1 plainly outline diatonic C major. The cluster of pitches in Horn 1, 2, and 3 alludes to C major but, in typical ambiguous fashion, the major 3rd of the chord that would create an actual C major chord is replaced with a major 2nd interval instead. The almost-C-major chord remains stagnant for many successive measures, allowing the traveling Horn 4 and Trombone 1 to dictate tonal expectation in this section.

Figure 3.7 - *Concerto No. 1, I. Allegro Moderato*, m. 17-28

Concerto I - m. 17-28

Allegro Moderato

Hn. in F 1, 2, 3
mp

Hn. 4 & Tbn in C
mp

Snare Drum
mp

In another example shown in Figure 3.8, in final movement of the *Trio for Brass* the tonal center is B \flat . The E major chord in the flugelhorn acts as the dominant chord to the “tonic” B \flat major chord in the trombone line. The function of the two chords and the repetition of the B \flat chord occurring on the strong beats in each measure results in a stable B \flat pitch center, but the melody in the horn does not tonally support the B \flat pitch center, suggesting octatonic tonality instead.

Figure 3.8 - *Trio for Brass, V. Allegro Vivace, m. 84-88*

Trio for Brass V - m. 84-88

The musical score consists of two systems of three staves each. The top system shows measures 84-86. The Flugel (in C) staff has a melodic line starting on B \flat and moving through various intervals, with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a *cresc. poco a poco* marking. The Horn (in C) staff has a more active melodic line, also starting on B \flat and featuring chromatic movement, with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a *cresc. poco a poco* marking. The Trbn staff has a steady accompaniment of eighth notes, starting on B \flat and moving in a stepwise fashion, with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a *cresc. poco a poco* marking. The bottom system shows measures 87-88. The Flugel and Horn parts continue their melodic lines, with the Flugel ending on B \flat and the Horn ending on a chromatic scale. The Trbn part continues its accompaniment. All parts end with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic.

Surprises in musical expectation occur from alterations in expected sequences of pitches in scales. Yet, tonal centers are established and supported by the cyclic nature of

all scales and modes; there is an expectation to arrive back at the point from which they began. For instance, in the opening phrase of the third movement of the *Trio for Brass* (Figure 3.9), the melody is in the Locrian mode with the tonal center C. The Phrygian mode is used in the second movement of *Four Sketches* between the two trumpets (Figure 3.10), which establishes the pitch F as the tonal center. The F Phrygian mode is used again in the fourth movement (Figure 3.6). E \flat Mixolydian appears in the third movement of the *Concerto* (Figures 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5). Line 12-19 of the third movement *Moderato* in *Postcards* is written in octatonic tonality, temporarily establishing B \flat as a pitch center (Figure 3.11).

Figure 3.9 - *Trio for Brass, III. Allegro Moderato*, m. 1-8

Trio for Brass III - m. 1-8

Horn (in C)

Figure 3.10 - *Four Sketches, II. Allegro Vivace*, m. 1-4

Four Sketches II - m. 1-4

C Tpt. 1
whisper mute

C Tpt. 2
whisper mute

Figure 3.11 - *Postcards, III. Moderato*, lines 12-13



3.2 Chromatically Influenced Melody

Trumpeter Nick Norton comments, “You usually cannot guess [Plog’s] next musical move. His music often requires many hours working on the fingering of passages.”²⁷ The most evident Plog passages needing technical work are the ones influenced by the copious partial, altered, and complete chromatic scales. Chromatic scales usually bring tonal expectation to thematic material because they are inherently predictable via their consecutive minor 2nd intervals. Alternatively, Plog’s chromatic scales and the music they form are made unpredictable by the addition of major 2nd intervals, by including only a snippet of a chromatic scale, or by abruptly changing the direction of a scale. While chromatic scales can function within a given tonality, they do not necessarily help to define tonal center in Plog’s music.

Illustrated in Figure 3.12 is an excerpt from the first movement of the *Trio for Brass* that contains the pitches of a full chromatic octave minus one pitch (A \sharp). The omission of the single pitch slightly alters the E \flat ’s expected moment of arrival. A complete descending chromatic scale would dictate that the phrase arrives on E \flat on the thirteenth 8th note. Instead, the subtle alterations effectively end the phrase early on the eleventh 8th note. Additionally, the chromatic order of D \sharp and D \flat is switched,

²⁷ Norton, Nick. “Tony Plog’s music.” Email to Al Cannon. 21 Aug 2011.

momentarily changing the direction of the scale. The elements of a chromatic scale are present, but without consecutive chromatic movement the succession of pitches is unexpected. The overall descent of the line is the only predictable element here.

Figure 3.12 - *Trio for Brass, I. Moderato*, m. 5-6



Figure 3.13 - *Four Sketches, I. Allegro Vivace*, m. 1-4



In *I. Allegro* from *Four Sketches*, the horn's first phrase is based on chromatic movement of pitches, but again is not entirely chromatic (Figure 3.13). With no discernable pattern from the succession of pitches, the direction of the line is elusive. Another example is found in the *Trio's* second movement *Andante* (Figure 3.14), where the flugelhorn line's direction is again unexpected, such as in measure 34. A single moment of predictability arises when measure 33 appears to be the start of a transposed sequence of measures 30-32. Alas, the establishment of the possible sequence in measure 34 dissolves when both the progression of pitches and the direction of the line change in measure 34. The alteration is further highlighted by the repeated, ostinato-like support in the horn and trombone.

Many more examples of chromatic-influenced melody are found in the solo

trumpet line of the *Concerto*. In measures 31-32 of the second movement, beginning with the second beat in the measure, the passage is mostly chromatic except for the two major 2nd intervals that are unpredictably included (shown in boxes in Figure 3.15). Measures 61-69 of the second movement (Figure 3.16) are also chromatically influenced. The sequence of pitches and concluding pitch of the phrase are unpredictable.

Figure 3.14 - *Trio for Brass, II. Andante*, m. 30-39

Trio for Brass II - m. 30-39

The musical score for *Trio for Brass, II. Andante*, measures 30-39, is presented in two systems. Each system contains three staves: Flugel (in C), Horn (in C), and Trbn (Trumpet). The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor), and the time signature is 3/4. The first system (measures 30-34) features a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic for the Flugel part, which begins with a melodic line. The Horn and Trbn parts play a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes, marked *sempre staccato*. The second system (measures 35-39) shows a dynamic increase, with *cresc.* and *poco a poco* markings. The Flugel part continues its melodic line, while the Horn and Trbn parts maintain their rhythmic accompaniment, also marked *cresc.* and *poco a poco*.

Figure 3.15 - *Concerto No. 1, II. Adagio*, m. 31-33

Concerto 1.2 - m. 31-33



Figure 3.16 - *Concerto No. 1, II. Adagio*, m. 60-69

Concerto 1.2 m. 60-69



Though appearing very challenging from the initial visual perusal, there are many manageable ways to prepare such phrases. The chromatic difficulties found in Figure 3.16 can primarily be addressed by finding subtle patterns in the sea of notes. Figure 3.17 shows such patterns. The circled notes are “landmarks,” notes of the same pitch that occur consistently for two measures on the strong beats of each measure. Taking note of these “goal” pitches can assist with the chromatic accuracy. The notes highlighted in boxes form a rising sequence of minor 3rd intervals and are short respites from the

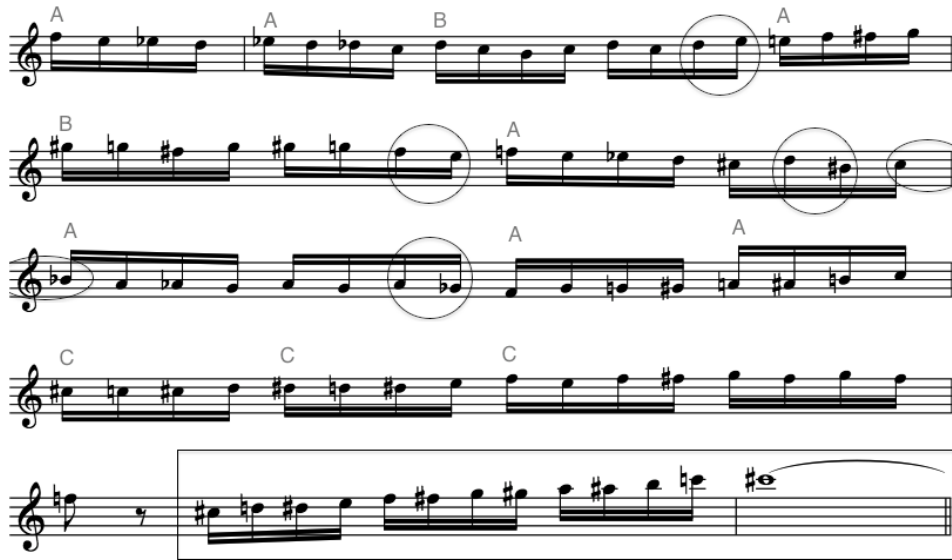
chromatic surroundings. Drawing in directional arrows can help the performer anticipate the direction of a beamed group of notes.

Figure 3.17 - *Concerto No. 1, II. Adagio*, m. 60-69 Exercise



Additional practice approaches can be applied in measures 153-159 in the fourth movement of the *Concerto* (Figure 3.18). The circled pitches indicate major 2nd intervals in the primarily chromatic texture. Some of the beamed groups of 16th notes are labeled “A,” “B,” and “C” to stress the directional patterns found in each grouping. In the “A” groups all four chromatic pitches descend; in the “B” groups the first three pitches descend and last ascends; and in the “C” groups, the first pitch descends and the last three ascend. Finally, the boxed-in phrase is a complete one-octave chromatic scale.

Figure 3.18 - *Concerto No. 1, IV. Allegro, m. 153-159* Exercise



In passages that have elusive patterns, or no patterns at all, further steps may be required to address technical difficulties. Professor Allan Dean suggests starting with Robert Nagel's *Speed Studies* before moving to Plog's music.²⁸ Select exercises from HL Clarke's *Technical Studies*, JB Arban's *Method*, and Pierre Thibaud's *Méthode pour Trompettiste Avancé* are also useful for improving finger agility, as are the scale-based exercises found in Yusef Lateef's *Repository of Scales and Melodic Patterns*. To specifically address agility in chromatic and chromatic-based scales, the exercise in Figure 3.19 duplicates the kind of unexpected events found in Plog's music. For extended practice the exercise can be altered to perpetuate the unexpected alterations shown here as versions one through three.

²⁸ Dean, Allan. "Plog Inquiry – Allan Dean." Email to Al Cannon. 17 Sept 2011.

Figure 3.19 – Chromatic Exercise



3.3 Pulse

Plog’s treatment of rhythm and meter often results in unexpected pulse. Trumpeter David Hickman, who premiered and recorded Plog’s *Concerto No. 1 for Trumpet and Brass Ensemble*, states that the motives developed through “slight rhythmic variation” cause Plog’s compositions to have a “quirkiness that keeps the listener interested.”²⁹ The rhythmic variations to which Hickman refers are a result of metric shifting and result in an interruption of anticipated pulse.

Plog generally writes conventional time signatures and uses quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes in technical passages and whole, half, and quarter notes in lyrical passages. Due to the presence of such straightforward meters and rhythms, the music is expected to have a simple, predictable sense of pulse. For example, in the opening movement of the *Trio for Brass* (Figure 3.20) the meter is $\frac{4}{4}$ with the performers either at rest or playing 8th notes; the counting required of performers is elementary. The 8th note in the first measure starts the movement with a *forte* marcato pulse on beat one of the

²⁹ Hickman, David. “Tony Plog project.” Email to Al Cannon. 21 May 2010.

measure. In the third measure, a quarter rest causes the anticipated phrasing — and thus the meter — to be displaced by one beat, and so the expectation of another strong pulse on beat one is denied. Instead, the same *forte* marcato chord occurs on beat two of measure three, and the entire phrase is shifted. While there is a sense of the 8th note pulse, the number of beats in a grouping is inconsistent. In the first three measures of the work the sense of pulse from metric grouping – and hence a sense of general expectation – is muddled. It is a prime example of Hickman’s observation of “slight rhythmic variation” in Plog’s works.

Figure 3.20 - *Trio for Brass, I. Moderato*, m. 1-4

The image shows a musical score for three brass instruments: Flugel (in C), Horn (in C), and Trbn. The score is in 4/4 time and covers measures 1 through 4. The Flugel part starts with a quarter rest, followed by eighth notes, with dynamics *f* and *p*. The Horn part starts with a quarter rest, followed by eighth notes, with dynamics *f* and *p*. The Trbn part starts with a quarter rest, followed by eighth notes, with dynamics *f* and *p*. The score includes various rhythmic markings such as accents and phrasing slurs.

Similarly, the emphasis on a particular beat may change from measure to measure. Such an example is found in the *Concerto No. 1* in the fourth movement. The excerpt in Figure 3.21 shows the accent on beat one in measure 107, on beat two in measure 108, and on beat three in measure 109. The accents occur on quarter notes, creating durational accents in addition to the articulated accent. The accents do not coincide with the downbeat of each $\frac{4}{4}$ measure; the meter stays in 4, while the pulse — indicated by the $D\flat$ quarter notes — is in $\frac{5}{4}$. Additionally, the played 8th notes alternate

sporadically from on the beat to off the beat, and consecutive played 8th notes occur unpredictably.

Figure 3.21 - *Concerto No. 1, IV. Allegro*, m. 106-110

Concerto IV - m. 106-110

Hrn 1 & 3

Hrn 2 & 4

This melodic material may lack pulse or may contain elements that disturb pulse. In the ostinato in *Postcards* (Figure 2.12) the number of 8th notes in the ostinato constantly changes. This inconsistency creates an unpredictable phrasing pattern, and again an unpredictable sense of pulse. In Figure 3.22, the ostinato is comprised of six, then four, then five 8th notes. The total number of 8th notes in each phrase in lines 1-2 of the movement total seven, six, and nine 8th notes.

Figure 3.22 - *Postcards, I. Moderato*, lines 1-2

Postcards I - Line 1-2

SIX

FOUR

FIVE

SEVEN

SIX

NINE

In lines 15-16 (Figure 2.15), the first A₁-pitched ostinato is comprised of five, then three, then only two 8th notes. The total number of 8th notes in each micro phrase in lines 15-16 of the movement total six, five, and again five 8th notes (indicated by the brackets under

the staff in Figure 3.23); these larger groupings do not indicate the conclusion of the overall phrase in the way that, for example, six, five, and four 8th note groupings would indicate. Combined with the fact that this particular composition has no defined meter, the erratic number of beats in each phrase inhibits expectations in phrasing.

Figure 3.23 - *Postcards, I. Moderato*, lines 15-16



Yet, both of these examples contain increasing intensity due to the increasing number of triplet and sextuplet interjections. In Figure 3.22, the triplet doubles from three to six notes, and then doubles again from six to twelve. In Figure 3.23, the single triplet interjection becomes a set of triplets, and then a trio of triplets; while the number of 8th notes decreases within the 8th note groupings, the number of 16th note triplets increases. This intensification through rhythmic crossfading may be useful for the performer in planning and communicating important points of arrival in sections of music that initially show no particular expectations in pulse. In this phrase a performer may wish to highlight the rhythmic crossfade, or instead highlight the rhythm in the micro phrases and hence highlight the unpredictability of the line's end.

Mixed meter passages are also used to bring about surprise in anticipated pulse. The *Allegro Moderato* in the first movement of the *Concerto No. 1* provides an example (Figure 3.7). This is the first concrete tempo of the *Concerto* after a long free-flowing

cadenza, so establishing tempo with consistent pulse at this point in the movement would be customary. As demonstrated in Figure 3.24, this is not the case.

Figure 3.24 - *Concerto No. 1, I. Allegro Moderato*, m. 17-28

Concerto I - m. 17-28

Allegro Moderato

Hn. in F 1, 2, 3
mp

Hn. 4 & Tbn in C
mp

Snare Drum
mp

The first phrase (measures 17-19) begins with a pattern of an 8th note followed by an 8th rest. After three occurrences, an additional 8th note is added into the phrase (indicated by the box) where an 8th rest is expected, resulting in a rhythmic anomaly and the measure of $\frac{3}{8}$ time. This happens again in the first phrase, this time in measure 19 where after two occurrences of the 8th note / 8th rest pattern an 8th note sounds again where an 8th rest is expected. The second phrase (measures 20-21) again takes on the pattern of an 8th note followed by an 8th rest. After four occurrences, an additional 8th note is added into the phrase where an 8th rest is expected. The third phrase (measures 22-24) is verbatim to the

first phrase. The fourth phrase (measures 25-27) is an extension of the second phrase, with the 8th note / 8th rest pattern occurring four times before an “extra” 8th note sounds and results in the measure of $\frac{3}{8}$ time. The $\frac{3}{8}$ measure is essentially in $\frac{4}{4}$ meter with an additional 8th note tacked onto the end, and is the final disruption in establishing pulse in the phrasing. The one indication of pulse is from the snare drum, whose entrances signify the start of each new phrase.

Even at times when pulse is established by consistent repetition, such as with the ostinato in the third movement *Allegro* from the *Concerto No. 1*, single melodic lines are still sometimes devoid of pulse. Despite the consistent $\frac{3}{8}$ meter and the clear start to each measure as indicated by the ostinato, the constant 16th note construction in the fast tempo erases pulse in this melodic line. Figure 3.5 shows the solo trumpet’s final phrase of the movement. Pulse is lacking within and at the start of each $\frac{7}{8}$ measure. The rhythm provides no indication about when and how the line will conclude.

The interrupted pulses and resulting adjusted meters may be addressed through subdivision and basic metronome work, and exercises from Tom Stevens’ *Changing Meter Studies* and Verne Reynolds’ *48 Études* may increase a player’s aptitude for accurately preparing Plog’s brass music. Familiarity with tonality, chromatic melody, and pulse and their affect on musical expectation is essential for a lucid macro comprehension of Plog’s brass music. The defining elements of Western music, all extant in Plog’s works, provide a structure from which subtle alterations combine to form his characteristic voice.

4 Timbre

The striking timbres in Plog's brass compositions are possibly the most idiosyncratic of his defining characteristics. The orchestration, distribution of melody into multiple players (similar to medieval hocket and Schoenberg's *Klangfarbenmelodie*), and frequent and sustained use of dissonance form a distinct timbral sound in Plog's works. Performer Gail Williams notes that, "timbre, phrasing, and balance are/were [Plog's] specialties on the trumpet," asserting that these attributes "are most important when preparing and studying Plog's music."³⁰

4.1 Orchestration

Though the composer states that he is not sure there is a "correct" interpretation of colour in his music,³¹ performers should highlight the timbres derived from the instrumentation and register. For example, in the *Trio for Brass*, Plog calls for the flugelhorn instead of trumpet (though Plog gives the option for trumpet to extend the accessibility of the work).³² The timbre of the flugelhorn is better suited to complement the horn and trombone than the trumpet (for information about the timbre of cylindrical and conical bored brass instruments, see Nos. 17, 19, 20, 21, and 26 in Cecil Forsyth's *Orchestration*). The similar timbres of the flugelhorn, horn, and trombone in certain registers provide an amalgamated brass ensemble sound, since the registers used by the flugelhorn in the *Trio* better match the other two instruments' timbres in their similar

³⁰ Gail Williams. Email to Al Cannon, 10 September 2011.

³¹ Appendix D, Question 14

³² Appendix D, Question 22

registers. The example in Figure 3.8 shows the three instruments voiced in close harmony, with the flugelhorn in its middle register, the horn in its middle and lower register, and the trombone in its upper register. The combination produces an ensemble timbre in which it is difficult to aurally discern one instrument from another.

Timbral similarities are highlighted even when an instrument plays in a more extreme part of its register. Figure 4.1 shows an excerpt from the *Trio* where the flugelhorn passes its phrase to the horn through a unison pitch. Two measures later, the trombone passes its phrase to the flugelhorn via a unison pitch. In each case the timbral change is subtle. The unison point of exchange, the changes in register, and the timbres of the low flugelhorn and horn mask the passing of the phrase from player to player in measure 32. The timbres of the high trombone and middle flugelhorn registers in measure 34 also mask the passing of the phrase from player to player.

Figure 4.1 - *Trio for Brass, I. Moderato*, m. 30-35

Trio for Brass I - m. 30-35

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is for the Flugel (in C), the middle staff is for the Horn (in C), and the bottom staff is for the Trombone (Trbn). The Flugel part begins in measure 30 with a melodic phrase that ends in measure 32. The Horn part begins in measure 32 with a melodic phrase that ends in measure 34. The Trombone part begins in measure 30 with a melodic phrase that ends in measure 32. The score shows the exchange of phrases between the instruments in measures 32 and 34.

Figure 4.2 - *Trio for Brass, II. Andante, m. 40-43*

The musical score for *Trio for Brass II, m. 40-43* consists of three staves: Flugel (in C), Horn (in C), and Trbn. Each staff begins with a dynamic marking of *f intense*. The Flugel and Horn parts feature continuous eighth-note patterns, while the Trbn part plays a more complex, rhythmic pattern with some rests. The notation is in treble clef for the Flugel and Horn, and bass clef for the Trbn.

Figure 4.3 - *Four Sketches, IV. Allegro, m. 67-70*

The musical score for *Four Sketches IV, m. 67-70* consists of three staves: C Tpt. 1, C Tpt. 2, and Tuba. Each staff begins with a dynamic marking of *ff*. The C Tpt. 1 and C Tpt. 2 parts feature eighth-note patterns, while the Tuba part plays a more complex, rhythmic pattern with some rests. The notation is in treble clef for the trumpets and bass clef for the tuba.

As shown in Figure 4.1, there are sections where the lowest-pitched instrument plays in its high register on pitches close to or higher than higher-pitched instruments. Figure 4.2 shows such an example in the *Trio* where the trombone plays in its high register above the flugelhorn and horn. Again, the resulting timbre conceals the presence of the three individual instruments and instead produces an amalgamated brass ensemble sound. Figure 4.3 shows an example from *Four Sketches* where the tuba plays in the high register and the trumpets in the low register. The register, loud dynamic, and dissonance

(discussed below in Chapter 4.3) create the definitive timbre found in Plog's brass chamber music.

Since the collective timbre is often a result of Plog's treatment of register and accompanying dynamics, appropriate balance is best achieved when performers subscribe to Plog's specific indications. Plog explicitly states, "if a brass ensemble...has a single dynamic then this dynamic should be balanced across the entire ensemble."³³ Trumpet player Nick Norton, who premiered Plog's *Concerto No. 2* for trumpet, states that Plog's "vertical music (chords) should generally be [as] balanced as possible."³⁴ Performers should not strive to make prominent an individual line; otherwise, the timbral effects may be obscured. Figure 4.3 is an example of "vertical music" that requires balance, as is Figure 2.16 from the *Trio*. Based on Plog's desire for dynamic balance, the subsequent timbral effect is lost if one voice overbalance or underbalances the others.

Plog also states, as might be expected when considering collective ensemble sound, that "articulations should be matched as well."³⁵ The trumpet melody in Figure 3.10 from *Four Sketches* requires the same mute, volume, and attack by each trumpeter to match timbre exactly, or the notion of the single continuous line – and unified timbre – is lost. The same is true for the music in Figure 3.8 from the *Trio*, where the flugelhorn and trombone players should execute the same volume and articulation to simulate the illusion that only one player is performing the entire line.

Plog's approach to timbre is unique in the exploitation of the harmonic series. A prime example, shown in Figure 4.4, is the opening cadenza of the *Concerto No. 1*. The

³³ Appendix D, Question 19

³⁴ Norton, Nick. Email to Al Cannon, 21 Aug 2011.

³⁵ Appendix D, Question 20

cadenza is constructed from the harmonic series with the indication “natural valve combinations and bending on opening solo are optional.”³⁶ Plog states that for this cadenza he had “the idea of some sort of ancient voice (perhaps coming from the mountains),” similar to “the beginning of the Britten *Serenade*, especially the notes that are out of tune, and so precise intonation was not [his] goal.”³⁷ Normally a trumpeter would need to be aware of the intonation tendencies of pitches played with alternate fingerings, especially in this register. For example, the harmonic series dictates that the sixth playable partial in every fingering combination is relatively flat to equal temperament; hence, playing high B \flat with no valves would result in a flat B \flat pitch on traditionally constructed trumpets. Similarly, all pitches beyond the first and second playable partials for the fingering combination of 1 and 3 (low G and low D) are grossly out-of-tune, but Plog indicates the use of this fingering from the third partial (G on the staff) all the way up to the tenth partial (high C#). The effect of these alternate fingerings on timbre creates the “ancient voice” Plog desires, and this is, as Plog states, more important than maintaining conventional precise intonation. Intonation aside, the accuracy of the written pitches may be compromised due to the difficult nature of playing alternate fingerings in this cadenza.³⁸ Since Plog indicates that natural valve use and bending are optional, a performer may consider the benefits of playing conventional fingerings to improve accuracy; but the composer’s intended timbre will be lost.

³⁶ Anthony Plog, *Concerto No. 1 for Trumpet and Brass Ensemble* (Vuarmarens, Switzerland: Editions BIM, 1988)

³⁷ Appendix D, Question 22

³⁸ Flexibility studies, such as those found in Schlossberg’s *Daily Drills and Technical Studies* and Irons’ *Twenty-seven groups of exercises*, can help prepare a player for the muscle and aural accuracy required for the natural valve combinations and bending.

Figure 4.4 - *Concerto No. 1, I. Allegro Moderato, m. 1-16*

Concerto I - opening cadenza

Adagio off stage (freely)

* natural valve combinations and bending on opening solo are optional

As shown by the cadenza in the *Concerto*, the overall demands in most of Plog’s trumpet works require the skills of an advanced player. Yet, despite the cadenza’s challenges, it is an example of orchestration that is idiomatic for the trumpet. Beyond the exploited physical structure of the trumpet through the harmonic series, the phrases incorporate places for breaths where breathing is indeed necessary for most players. The *Adagio* tempo, “off stage (freely)” indication, and half notes throughout invite proper breathing and allow face muscles to recover from the difficult slurs. Later in the *Concerto* the endurance demands on the soloist are made easier by the amount of time for rest between phrases, such as in the fourth movement where the soloist rests for thirteen measures, plays for nine, and then rests again for fifteen measures before reentering. Similarly, the phrases in the second movement of *Postcards* allow for small breaks to be

taken if the trumpeter tires. In all three movements of *Postcards* the phrasing provides obvious places to breathe, and the same is true in the *Trio for Brass* where, even in the fast-paced sections, the composer provides rests in places that encourage proper breathing.

In his chamber music, Plog also considers the endurance limits of the performers. The three solo cadenzas in the *Trio for Brass* not only bridge the movements but also strategically allow the other players to rest. The trumpet cadenza occurs first, allowing the player two upcoming substantial periods of rest as the work progresses and the player presumably tires. Where music would be impossible or extremely difficult for a single player due to natural limitations with air, the distribution of the line makes the music feasible for the face muscles (such as shown in Figure 3.10 where the trumpets trade the line in the second movement of *Four Sketches*). These and similar orchestration techniques discussed below in Chapter 4.2 result in music that is idiomatic for brass performers.

4.2 Distribution of Melodic Line

In his 1975 book *Sound Structure in Music*, composer Robert Erickson generalizes, “Melodies do not switch instruments from note to note in the historical styles of Western music; the instrument is kept the same and the pitches change.”³⁹ Plog’s melodic material in his brass chamber music differs from this approach by distributing single melodic lines into multiple instruments. For example, in Figure 4.5, a single melodic line is distributed between the flugelhorn and horn. The oscillation of timbre

³⁹ Robert Erickson, *Sound Structure in Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 12.

between the instruments produces subtle changes in a melody that could have been written for a single player. With the dynamic and articulation markings being the same for both instruments, and though the subtle changes in timbre evident, the collective timbre of the entire phrase creates a new ‘meta’ brass instrument.

Figure 4.5 - *Trio for Brass, III. Allegro Moderato*, m. 71-73

The image shows a musical score for two instruments: Flugel (in C) and Horn (in C). The title above the score is "Trio for Brass III - m. 71-73". The Flugel part is written on a treble clef staff and consists of a continuous melodic line of eighth notes, starting on G4 and moving through various intervals. The Horn part is written on a bass clef staff and consists of a similar melodic line of eighth notes, starting on G3 and moving through various intervals. Both parts are marked with the dynamic *mp* and the articulation *sempre staccato*.

An excerpt from *Four Sketches* illustrates another instance of a distributed melodic line (Figure 4.6). Plog passes pitches cyclically from horn to trombone to tuba, disregarding conventional hierarchy of register based on instrument size. The register affects the timbre of the passage; the tuba sometimes plays the highest pitches, the horn sometimes the lowest. The cycle is prioritized and hence timbral difference is emphasized. Figure 4.7 shows three voices combined into a single melodic line. Plog applies line distribution to a larger ensemble in *I. Allegro* of the *Concerto No. 1* (Figure 4.8). The trombones and tuba play during the horns’ 8th note rests, and vice versa. The result is continuously sounding 8th notes that constantly vary in timbre.

Figure 4.6 - *Four Sketches, II. Allegro Vivace*, m. 53-56

Four Sketches II - m. 53-56

Hn. (in C)

Tbn.

Tuba

Figure 4.7 - *Four Sketches, II. Allegro Vivace*, m. 53-56 (Altered by author)

Four Sketches II - m. 53-56

Resulting Melodic Phrase

Resulting Melodic Phrase

Figure 4.8 - *Concerto No. 1, I. Allegro Moderato*, m. 93-98

Concerto 1.1 m. 93-98

Horn in F 1 *mf*

Horn in F 2 *mf*

Horn in F 3 *mf*

Horn in F 4 *mf*

Trombone 3 *mf*

Trombone 4 *mf*

Tuba 1 *mf*

Plog's distribution of a melodic idea to multiple individuals is reminiscent of the medieval-era hocket technique. Hocketing is "a rhythmic device for two performers featuring interruptive rests in one voice that are filled in by the other."⁴⁰ Figure 4.9 shows hocketing in an anonymous 13th century motet, *A Certain Spaniard*. In the boxed-in areas, the triplum and duplum voices perform an interchange similar to the music in Figures 4.6 and 4.8. Though a unison pitch exchange does not occur in Plog's music, the interspersing of pitches and rests are reminiscent of hocketing.

Figure 4.9 - *A Certain Spaniard (In seculum breve)* – Anonymous 13th Century



Ernest Sanders' definition of hocket applies to Plog's orchestration:

...hocket-like effects are the result of concern with texture or colour, while non-Western 'hocketing' generally results either from the necessity of

⁴⁰ Sarah Fuller. *The European Musical Heritage, 800-1750*. (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1987), 86-87

allocating portions of a melody or of a complex sound pattern (as in the gamelan music of Bali) to more than one instrument because of limitations of range, or from the social partiality for rapid and colourful antiphonal interchange.⁴¹

While Plog's hocket-like orchestration results in interesting texture and colour, the "social partiality" for "antiphonal interchange" has an important side effect for brass players: melody allocated to more than one instrument has an inherent advantage since endurance requirements are eased. The difference in difficulty between Figures 4.6 and 4.7 is significant: the example in 4.6 is easily performed by all three players and the music is given a distinct timbre via the line distribution, versus the example in 4.7 where one player would need to play a constant, single line of large intervals with no apparent place for breathing and no added timbral interest. There is a similar event shown in Figure 4.10 from the *Concerto*, where the trombones play an interchange of pitches and rests. Figures 4.11 and 4.12 show the same music compacted into fewer lines, which again would be more demanding for the individual player. Figure 4.13 shows the horn section in the *Concerto* passing off 16th note fragments to one another; Figure 4.14 shows the music if compacted into a single more challenging horn part.

⁴¹ Ernest H. Sanders, "Hocket," in *Grove Music Online* (<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>), accessed on 23 September 2011.

Figure 4.10 - *Concerto No. 1, IV. Allegro*, m. 28-34

This musical score shows four tuba parts (Tbn. 1, 2, 3, and 4) in bass clef. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The music is in 4/4 time. Tbn. 1 and 2 play a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. Tbn. 3 and 4 play a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes and rests. The score is divided into two systems of three measures each.

Figure 4.11 - *Concerto No. 1, IV. Allegro*, m. 28-34 (Altered by author)

This musical score shows two tuba parts (Tbn. 1 and 2) in bass clef. The key signature has two flats. The music is in 4/4 time. Tbn. 1 plays a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. Tbn. 2 plays a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes and rests. The score is divided into two systems of three measures each.

Figure 4.12 - *Concerto No. 1, IV. Allegro*, m. 28-34 (Altered by author)

This musical score shows one tuba part (Tbn. 1) in bass clef. The key signature has two flats. The music is in 4/4 time. Tbn. 1 plays a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The score is divided into two systems of three measures each.

Figure 4.13 - *Concerto No. 1, IV. Allegro, m. 50-53*



The image shows a musical score for four horns, labeled Hn. 1, Hn. 2, Hn. 3, and Hn. 4. Each horn part is written on a single staff in treble clef. The music is characterized by a hocket-like texture, with various rhythmic patterns and melodic fragments distributed across the four staves. The notation includes eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Figure 4.14 - *Concerto No. 1, IV. Allegro, m. 50-53 (Altered by author)*



The image shows an altered version of the musical score for two horns. The two staves are now filled with a dense, continuous melodic line, where the previously fragmented notes from the four horns are now compressed into two staves. The notation is more complex, with many beamed notes and frequent chromatic changes, creating a rich, textured sound.

As a consequence of the hocket-like orchestration, Plog's timbres remind one of Arnold Schoenberg's *Klangfarbenmelodie*, as shown in Figure 4.15 in Schoenberg's *Five Pieces for Orchestra* (from *III. Mäßige Viertel*). The subtle constant changes between muted and open instruments create a large palette of colours that would not exist if the melodic content were compressed into fewer lines.

Composer Anton Webern extended Schoenberg's *Klangfarbenmelodie* concept in his own serial-based music, where "*Klangfarbenmelodie* took the form of a shotgun-like dispersal of orchestral elements, embracing both timbre and register."⁴² Figure 4.16 shows an example of *Klangfarbenmelodie* in Webern's *Opus 24 Konzert* (and reduced

⁴² Bailey, Kathryn. "Webern, Anton" in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. 16 Sept 2011

version in Figure 4.17). In this example, Webern moves the melodic material from one instrument to another in every measure, hence altering timbre in every measure. While orchestration in Plog's brass music does not necessarily pass from voice to voice as frequently as done in this Webern example, Plog's distribution of melody to multiple voices is, like *hocket*, reminiscent of *Klangfarbenmelodie*. Though similar application of the technique is applied in recent brass chamber music, such as in the openings of the first and second movements of Jan Bach's *Laudes* (1971) and in the final *Presto* in André Previn's *Four Outings for Brass* (1975), the resulting collection of timbres in Plog's *Klangfarbenmelodie*-like orchestration is a defining characteristic of his brass music.

Figure 4.15 - *Five Pieces for Orchestra, III. Mäßige Viertel (Farben)*, m. 25-28 – Schoenberg, A.

The image shows a musical score for the brass section of Schoenberg's *Five Pieces for Orchestra, III. Mäßige Viertel (Farben)*, measures 25-28. The score is written for Horns (I, II, III, IV), Trumpets (I, II, III), and Positively (I, II, III, IV). The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The music is characterized by rapid melodic changes between instruments, creating a hocket effect. Dynamic markings include *ppp* (pianissimo) and *pp* (pianissimo). Performance instructions are provided for various parts, such as "I. Löffen" (Horn I), "II. mit D." (Trumpet II with mute), "III. mit Dämpfer" (Trumpet III with mute), "I. mit Dämpfer" (Horn I with mute), "II. ohne D." (Horn II without mute), and "IV. ohne D." (Horn IV without mute).

Figure 4.16 - *Konzert (Opus 24), III. Sehr rasch, m. 1-10 – Webern, A.*

III. Sehr rasch (♩ = c. 120)

Flute
Oboe
Clarinet in Bb
Horn in F
Trumpet in C
Trombone
Violin
Viola
Piano

Figure 4.17 - *Konzert (Opus 24), III. Sehr rasch, m. 1-10 – Webern, A. (Altered by author)*

III. Sehr rasch (♩ = c. 120)

4.3 Dissonance

Baker's Student Encyclopedia of Music cites the origin of the word dissonance from the Latin *dis*, meaning “not together,” and *sonare*, meaning, “sound.” It relates

dissonance to the word *discord*, meaning “disagreement of hearts,” from *corda* meaning “hearts.”⁴³ In *Grove Music Online*, dissonance is described as having a “roughness,” and that psychological use of the term generally indicates an aesthetic “unpleasantness” when compared with its counterpart consonance.⁴⁴ Plog’s brass music often contains sections of minor and major 2nd intervals that are primarily organized into pitch clusters and parallel moving melodic lines of unison rhythm. In the context of typical consonance in Western music, these sections of close intervals are dissonant because of their “rough” and “unpleasant” qualities. Considering the presence of the minor and major 2nd intervals, dissonance is categorized here as an aspect of timbre because of its union in Plog’s music with the particular instrumentation, register, and dynamics described above. Concepts of dissonance related to timbre are derived from aural concepts of critical bandwidth and overtone content.⁴⁵

The range of dissonance in Plog’s brass music encompasses the slightly discordant to extremely cacophonous, and is often enhanced by extreme dynamic markings. Figure 4.17 shows a conservative example from the second movement of *Four Sketches* where the horn and trombone play at a parallel major 2nd interval in unison rhythm at a *piano* dynamic. Both instruments are muted and play in registers where the timbre of the instruments is similar; hence, the dissonance of the ongoing parallel major 2nd intervals is highlighted. The dissonance continues in a repeat of the phrase one octave higher in two cup-muted trumpets (not shown). Figure 4.18 shows dissonance in gentler

⁴³ Nicholas Slominsky, “Dissonance,” in *Baker’s Dictionary of Music*. (New York: Schirmer Reference, 1997), 242.

⁴⁴ Claude V. Palisca and Brian C.J. Moore. “Consonance,” in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, (<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>), accessed 27 May 2012.

⁴⁵ For in-depth information on critical bandwidth and its relation to perception of timbre, see Chapters 4 and 5 in *The Physics and Psychophysics of Music: an Introduction* by Juan Roederer, and Chapter 5 in *Tuning, Timbre, Spectrum, Scale* by William Setheras.

music from the *Concerto*, where the hoquet-like distribution of the melody, shown in Figure 4.19 below, is prolonged as if held by a piano's sustaining pedal. Though subtle at this soft dynamic, the additional timbre of the four trumpets intensifies the dissonance in measure 19.

Figure 4.18 - *Four Sketches, II. Allegro Vivace*, m. 33-36

Four Sketches II - m. 33-36

Hn. (in C) *p*

Tbn. *p*

continued in trumpets, with cup mutes

Figure 4.19 - *Concerto No. 1, II. Adagio*, m. 17-20

Concerto 1 2 m. 17-20

C Tpt. 1 *pp*

C Tpt. 2 *pp*

C Tpt. 3 *pp*

C Tpt. 4 *pp*

Hn. 1 in F *pp*

Hn. 2 in F *pp*

Hn. 3 in F *pp*

Hn. 4 in F *pp*

Figure 4.20 - *Concerto No. 1, II. Adagio*, m. 17-20 (Altered by author)



Figure 4.21 - *Trio for Brass, II. Andante*, m. 40-43 (Altered by author)



Figure 3.20 shows a returning minor 2nd cluster in the opening bars of the *Trio*, establishing an aggressive timbre through dissonance in the very beginning of the work. A more intense dissonance is demonstrated above in Figure 4.2, where timbre created by the instruments' registers and loud volume is more colourful from the dissonant pitch clusters, which are mainly comprised of minor and major 2nd intervals. Figure 4.20 shows the break down of pitch clusters from Figure 4.2.

The example in Figure 4.3 has similarly distinctive timbre. Dissonance is derived from each instrument playing at a minor 2nd interval from the next, accentuated by the low register of the trumpets and the high register of the tuba at the *forte* dynamic. The excerpt in Figure 4.21 from the final movement of the *Trio* is even more dissonant. With each passing beat, the trombone oscillates between matching the flugelhorn at the octave and moving away from this "unison" by a minor or major 2nd interval, resulting in minor or major 7th intervals (inverted 2nd intervals an octave apart). The horn is dissonant with the flugelhorn via syncopation, initially sharing pitches and then descending into the

trombone's range. The phrase resolves into a cluster of minor 2nd intervals, with the extreme dynamics and constant 8th notes enhancing the texture.

Figure 4.22 - *Trio for Brass, V. Allegro Vivace, m. 37-41*

The image shows a musical score for three brass instruments: Flugel (in C), Horn (in C), and Trombone (Trbn). The score is for measures 37-41 of the piece 'Trio for Brass V, Allegro Vivace'. The Flugel and Horn parts begin with a fortissimo (sf) dynamic and a cluster of minor 2nd intervals, then transition to a simile section. The Trbn part starts with a fortissimo (f) dynamic and a cluster of minor 2nd intervals. The score ends with a fortissimo (f) dynamic.

Dissonant sections often last for many measures at a time and sometimes segue into contrasting sections that are yet still dissonant, such as in the example in Figure 4.22 from the second movement of the *Concerto*. A *fortissimo* cluster of minor 2nd intervals, spread through many octaves, arrives at the *Allegro* with a contrasting *p* volume and 16th note rhythms. The 16th notes in the trumpets and trombones are set a minor 2nd interval apart, with an obscured melodic idea shown through accent marks.

As with the treatment of register and hocket-like orchestration of melody, Plog's use of dissonance contributes to the characteristic sound of his brass chamber music compositions. As with register and orchestration, ensemble balance and consistent articulation in sections of dissonance are again necessary to achieve timbres indicative of Plog's writing. The music in Figure 4.18 is an example where dissonance is potentially veiled — and hence melody is potentially veiled — if one voice overbalances or underbalances the others, or if one player does not play the accent articulation. Similarly, in measure 38 of Figure 4.22 the accented 16th notes must have uniform articulation in

order to create the intended timbral effect derived from dissonance.

The distinct timbre found in Plog's brass chamber music is a defining characteristic of the composer. Thoughtful consideration of Plog's approach to timbre — through orchestration, register, distribution of melodic line, and frequent use of dissonance — is necessary for the successful interpretation and performance of his works.

Figure 4.23 - Concerto No. 1, II. Adagio, m. 37-41

Concerto 1.2 m. 37-41

Allegro ♩ = ♩

Solo B♭ Tpt.

C Tpt. 1

C Tpt. 2

C Tpt. 3

C Tpt. 4

Hn. 1 in F

Hn. 2 in F

Hn. 3 in F

Hn. 4 in F

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tbn. 3

Tbn. 4

Tuba 1

Tuba 2

5 Conclusion

Anthony Plog's masterful motivic development, use of musical surprise, and use of aural color create brass ensemble music appealing to many performers. Plog's writing for the trumpet is especially idiomatic, making even the most difficult passages rewarding to practice and perform. His brass works employ many elements of daily practice, such as lip slurs, proper breathing, and finger technique, making the music approachable once analyzed. Plog's brass compositions are frequently programmed and have become staple works in the brass repertoire.

Through his many brass compositions, including those discussed in this dissertation, Anthony Plog's works have filled a niche in brass repertoire — and especially in trumpet repertoire — by treating the trumpet as the capable chromatic instrument it has been for two hundred years. He bends the typical boundaries of Western music without breaking them, encouraging an appreciation for new music in general. His publications, both old and new, deserve further performance, especially by music students wishing to venture away from over-played and decades-old recital repertoire still deemed “new” music. The characteristics that define Anthony Plog's originality encourage a new aesthetic standard for the entire brass idiom; his legacy will be a vital influence for many decades to come.

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Appendix A

List of Brass Compositions & Publication Sources

Brass Ensembles

Trio for Brass (1996) - Editions BIM

Triple Concerto for Trumpet, Horn, Trombone, and Orchestra (1998) - Editions BIM

Animal Ditties 7 for Brass Quintet & Narrator (1987) - Editions BIM

Concerto 2010 for Brass Quintet & Wind Ensemble (2010) - Editions BIM

Four Sierra Scenes for Soprano and Brass Quintet (1974) - Western International Music

Four Sketches for Brass Quintet (1990) - Editions BIM

Mini-Suite for Brass Quintet (1972) - Western International Music

Mosaics for Brass Quintet (2000) - Editions BIM

Songs of War and Loss for Baritone and Brass Quintet (2011) - Editions BIM

Animal Ditties 4 for Brass Ensemble (2001) - Editions BIM

Mini Variations on Amazing Grace for Brass Ensemble (1987) - Editions BIM

Music for Brass Octet (1980) - Western International Music

Scherzo for Brass Ensemble (1994) - Editions BIM

Summit Fanfare for Large Brass Ensemble (2004) - Editions BIM

Trumpet

Pedagogy

16 Contemporary Etudes (1977) – Tromba Publications

Etudes and Duets (1993) - Editions BIM

Method for Trumpet, Volumes 1-7 (2003-2009) - Balquhider Music

Solo

Animal Ditties 1 (1976) - Wimbleton / Trigram Music

Animal Ditties 2 (1983) – Brass Press / Editions BIM

Concerto No. 1 for Trumpet and Brass Ensemble (1998) - Editions BIM

Concerto No. 1 for Trumpet and Wind Ensemble (2008) - Editions BIM

Concerto No. 2 for Trumpet and Orchestra (1997) - Editions BIM

Concertino for Trumpet, Trombone, and Brass Ensemble (2000) - Editions BIM

Double Concerto for Two Trumpets and Chamber Orchestra (2002) - Editions BIM

Four Themes on Paintings of Edvard Munch for Trumpet & Organ (1985) - Editions BIM

How the Trumpet Got Its Toot (2004) - Anthony Plog Publications

Jocann Trio for Flute, Trumpet, and Organ (2010) - Editions BIM

Nocturne for Trumpet and Strings/Piano/Organ (1993) - Editions BIM

Postcards I for Solo Trumpet (1997) - Editions BIM

Sierra Journal for Soprano, Trumpet, and Orchestra (2011) - Editions BIM

Sonata for Trumpet and Piano (2009) – Editions BIM
Thoughts for Trumpet and Organ (2010) - Editions BIM
Three Miniatures for Trumpet and Piano/Wind Ensemble (1989) - Editions BIM
Triple Concerto for Trumpet, Horn, Trombone, and Orchestra (1998) - Editions BIM
Two Scenes for Soprano, Trumpet, and Organ (1974) - Editions BIM

Flugelhorn

Contemplations for Flugelhorn and Wind Ensemble (2007) - Editions BIM
Ride em Cowboy for Flugelhorn and Trombone (2011) - Editions BIM
Trio for Brass (1996) - Editions BIM

Trumpet Ensemble

Fanfare FT 1844 for Four Trumpets (2011) - Editions BIM
Fanfare MT for Nine Trumpets (1999) - Editions BIM
Hurry Up for Four Trumpets (2002) - Editions BIM
Suite for Six Trumpets (1980) - Editions BIM

Horn

Aesops Fables for Horn, Piano, and Narrator (1991) - Southern Music
Animal Ditties 3 (1990) - Editions BIM
Concerto No. 1 for Horn and Orchestra (2012) - Editions BIM
Concerto No. 2 for Horn and Chamber Orchestra (2012) - Editions BIM
Dialogue for Horn, Tuba, and Piano (1994) - Editions BIM
Horn Quartet (2009) – Jomar Press
Nocturne for Horn and String Orchestra/Piano (1987) – Editions BIM
Postcards II for Solo Horn (2000) - Editions BIM
Three Miniatures for Horn and Piano (2000) - Editions BIM
Three Sketches for Oboe, Horn, and Piano (1995) - Editions BIM
Three Sonnets for Horn, Piano, and Narrator (1991) - Editions BIM
Triple Concerto for Trumpet, Horn, Trombone and Orchestra (1998) - Editions BIM

Euphonium

Erica and the Euphonium (1993) - Anthony Plog Publications
Short Meditation for 12 Euphoniums or Trombones (2010) - Editions BIM
Three Profiles for antiphonal Euphonium/Tuba Ensemble (2006) – Editions BIM

Trombone

Four Themes on Paintings of Goya for Trombone and Piano (2001) - Editions BIM
Nocturne for Trombone and Strings (1998/2000) - Editions BIM
Postcards III for Solo Trombone (2003) - Editions BIM
Postcards IV for Solo Bass Trombone (2011) - Editions BIM
Ride em Cowboy for Flugelhorn and Trombone (2011) - Editions BIM
Short Meditation for 12 Euphoniums or Trombones (2010) - Editions BIM

Sonare for Trombone and Organ (2011) - Editions BIM
Three Miniatures for Trombone and Wind Ensemble/Piano (1994) - Editions BIM
Triple Concerto for Trumpet, Horn, Trombone and Orchestra (1998) - Editions BIM
Trombone Quartet No. 1, "Densities" (2002) - Editions BIM

Tuba

Concerto for Tuba and Orchestra (1998) - Editions BIM
Dialogue for Horn, Tuba, and Piano (1994) - Editions BIM
Dialogue for Two Tubas (2009) - Editions BIM
Fantasy Movements for Tuba Quartet (2010) - Cimarron Music
Nocturne for Tuba and Piano/String Orchestra (2005) - Editions BIM
Sonata for Tuba and Piano (2007) - Editions BIM
Statements for Tuba/Contrabass Trombone and Piano (1992) - Editions BIM
Three Miniatures for Tuba and Piano/Wind Ensemble (1992) - Editions BIM
Three Profiles for Antiphonal Euphonium/Tuba Ensemble (2006) – Editions BIM

Appendix B: Discography

I. Cited Works on CD

II. Brass Works on CD

III. Audio/Video Recordings on Youtube

I. Cited Works

Concerto No. 1 for Trumpet and Brass Ensemble

1. Colors for Brass - The Music of Anthony Plog (1995)
Summit Brass; David Hickman, soloist
Summit Records
2. Plog/Wilbye/Fanzetti/Hornoff/Rautavaara/Berners (2006)
Ensemble: Millar Brass Ensemble; George Vosburgh, soloist
Koss Records

Four Sketches for Brass Quintet

1. Colors for Brass - The Music of Anthony Plog (1995)
St. Louis Brass Quintet
Summit Records
2. Spanish Brass Luur Metalls and Friends (2002)
Spanish Brass Luur Metalls
Cascavelle Records
3. Norem Brass and Friends (2003)
Norem Brass
Centaur Records
4. Brass Sketches (2003)
Eastern Kentucky University Faculty Brass Quintet
Mark Custom Records
5. Blue Dawn into White Heat (1999)
University of Minnesota Wind Ensemble
Innova
6. Wonderful World (2010)
Munich Brass Connection
Bauer Studios GmbH

Postcards for Solo Trumpet

1. One (2004)
Kevin Cobb, trumpet
Summit Records

Trio for Brass for Flugelhorn, Horn, and Trombone

1. Ewazen/Plog/Hovhaness Brass Trios (2010)
University of Maryland Brass Trio
Albany Music Distribution

II. Works for Brass

Aesop's Fables for Horn, Piano, and Narrator

1. The Complete Hornist (2004)
Thomas Bacon, horn and Phillip Moll, piano
Summit Records

Animal Ditties 1 for Narrator, Trumpet, and Piano

1. The Anthony Thompson Collection (1999)
Anthony Thompson, trumpet and Graham Eccles, piano
AT Records

Animal Ditties 2 for Narrator, Trumpet, and Piano

1. Twentieth Century Settings for Trumpet (1993)
Anthony Plog, trumpet and Sharon Davis, piano
Crystal Records

Animal Ditties 4 for Narrator and Brass Ensemble

1. Colors for Brass: The Music of Anthony Plog (1995)
Summit Brass
Summit Records

Animal Ditties 8 for Narrator and Brass Quintet

1. Fascinating Rhythms (2007)
St. Louis Brass Quintet
Summit Records

The Bells for Soprano and Brass Ensemble

1. New Dimensions for Trumpet Ensemble (2004)
Freiburg Trumpet Ensemble
Summit Records

Concerto 2010

1. Regenesi: Music of Renewal (2011)
American Brass Quintet
Albany Music Distribution

Concerto No. 2 for Trumpet and Orchestra

1. Trumpet Concertos (2007)
Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra / Kirk Trevor; John Holt, trumpet
Crystal Records

Double Concerto for Two Trumpets and Chamber Orchestra

1. On the Road (2007)
Tamas Velencei and Gabor Tarkovi, trumpets
Schagerl Records

2. Shadowcatcher: American Music for Brass, Winds, and Percussion (2011)
West Chester University Wind Ensemble / Andrew Yozviak
Terry Everson and Jean-Christophe Dobrzelewski, trumpets
MSR Classics

Four Concert Duets (from Ten Concert Duets)

1. Dallas Trumpets (2003)
Richard Giangiuolo and Bert Truax, trumpets
Crystal Records
2. Bret Jackson, Trumpet (2007)
Bret Jackson, and Anthony Plog, trumpets and Jed Moss, piano
Summit Records

Four Sierra Scenes for Soprano and Brass Quintet

1. Untitled LP (1970s) - out of print
Fine Arts Brass Quintet
Crystal Records

Four Themes on Paintings of Edvard Munch for Trumpet and Organ

1. Twentieth Century Music for Trumpet and Organ (1994)
Anthony Plog, trumpet and Han Ola Ericsson, organ
BIS Records
2. Studies in Relief (2002)
Don Eagle, trumpet and Marilyn Keiser, organ
Pro Organo Records

Horn Quartet No. 1

1. Horn Muse (2011)
Gail Williams, William Caballero, Thomas Bacon, & William Barnewitz, horns
Disc Makers

Hurry Up for Four Trumpets

1. New Dimensions (2004)
Freiburg Trumpet Ensemble / Anthony Plog
Summit Records

Mini Suite for Brass Quintet

1. The Brass Abacus (2006)
Fine Arts Brass Quintet
Western International Records

Mini Variations on Amazing Grace for Brass Ensemble

1. Colors for Brass - The Music of Anthony Plog (1995)
Summit Brass
Summit Records

Mosaics for Brass Quintet

1. American Brass Quintessence (2000)
American Brass Quintet
Summit Records

Music for Brass Octet

1. Colors for Brass - The Music of Anthony Plog (1995)
Summit Brass
Summit Records

Scherzo for Brass Ensemble

1. Spirits of Fire (1998)
Summit Brass
Summit Records

Statements for Tuba and Piano

1. Point in Time (2005)
Denson Paul Pollard, tuba and Yvonne Lai Yim Fong, piano
Denson Paul Pollard

Suite for Six Trumpets

1. Contrasts for Trumpets (1997)
Adolf Herseth, Bo Nilsson, Claes Stromblad, Anthony Plog, Otto Sauter, and Urban
Agnas, trumpets
Doyen Records

Summit Fanfare

1. Summit Brass Night: Live in Colorado (2008)
Summit Brass
Summit Records

Three Miniatures for Trombone and Piano or Wind Ensemble

1. Balancing Act (1998)
Bill Booth, trombone
Crystal Records
2. Slide Ride - Works for Trombone and Band (2005)
Tennessee Tech Symphony Band / Joseph Hermann; Joshua Hauser, trombone
Mark Masters Records

Three Miniatures for Tuba and Piano or Wind Ensemble

1. Daniel in the Lions Den (1995)
Arizona State University Symphony Band; Daniel Perantoni, tuba
Summit Records
2. Tuba Libero (1995)
Roger Bobo, tuba and Marie Condamin, piano
Crystal Records

3. Danzas (2006)
Oystein Baadsvik, tuba
BIS Records
4. Blue Plate Special (2001)
Joseph Skillen, tuba and Jan Grimes, piano
Mark Master Records
5. Road Less Traveled (2012)
Craig Knox, tuba & Rodrigo Ojeda, piano
Long Tone Music

Three Miniatures for Trumpet and Piano

1. Solo de Concours (2009)
Matthias Höfs, trumpet and Stephan Kiefer, piano
Cryston Records

Trombone Quartet No. 1 "Densities"

1. 4.1 (2010)
Trombones of the St. Louis Symphony
Stl Trombones
2. Collage (2007)
Will Kimball, Larry Zalkind, James Nova, and Russell McKinney, trombones
Tantara Records

III. Audio/Video Recordings from YouTube

Concerto No. 1 complete. Barbara Butler & US Army Band Pershing's Own

Youtube Channel: NationalTrumpetComp

<http://www.youtube.com/user/NationalTrumpetComp#p/c/F47F6E1C8FDFE7A4/2/3z4y84iHY70>

<http://www.youtube.com/user/NationalTrumpetComp#p/c/F47F6E1C8FDFE7A4/1/xRaLPuAffmA>

http://www.youtube.com/user/NationalTrumpetComp#p/c/F47F6E1C8FDFE7A4/0/NNf4G_kEKJI
2010

Concerto No. 2 mvt. 4, Natalie Fuller, trumpet

Youtube Channel: NationalTrumpetComp

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZZm1Hw8Mmik>
2011

Four Sketches mvt. 1, In Medias Brass

Youtube Channel: FidelioMedia

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJhQ44gN3qE>
2010

Four Sketches complete, University of Oklahoma Faculty BQ

Youtube Channel: OUGrandetuba

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C0HzRkd8Xcw&list=PL8B0D6626B6B89FDB&index=3&feature=plpp>

<http://www.youtube.com/user/OUGrandetuba#p/u/7/tzDehS4XCbl>
2009

Four Sketches mvt 2, Munich Brass Connection

Youtube Channel: MBCMember

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZHxUTzd-Cyg>
2008

Plog, Anthony – interview. Editions BIM.

Youtube Channel: editionsbim

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9HkRsejg2C0&list=PL8B0D6626B6B89FDB&index=5&feature=plpp>

2010

Postcards I complete, Efim Benevich, trumpet

Youtube Channel: Russiantrumpeter

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJsdT52pxGk&feature=autoplay&list=PL8B0D6626B6B89FDB&lf=plpp&playnext=1>

2010

Postcards I complete, Allen Vizzutti, trumpet

Youtube Channel: raphael64000

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4NLj4Hi2J-U>
2011

Postcards I complete, Katie Miller, trumpet

Youtube Channel: sichr27

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wr6T8PHJrBE&list=PL8B0D6626B6B89FDB&index=12&feature=plpp>

2010

Trio for Brass mvt. 5, Warsaw Brass Trio

Youtube Channel: zoltankiss

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cuDzxQG12ks>
2008

Trio for Brass part I, Kalamazoo Brass Collective

Youtube Channel: KzooBC Channel

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g3XtJ-DDP9M&list=PL8B0D6626B6B89FDB&index=17&feature=plpp_video

Appendix C

Sample Listing of Brass Performances 2002-2011

Hornist Thomas Bacon states, “Everybody plays Tony’s music now, and the task of compiling an accurate and complete list of performances seems to me quite impossible.”¹ Indeed, and so below is instead a sampling of the myriad performances of Plog’s brass music given in the last decade by both students and professionals.

10 September 2002

Animal Ditties

William Takacs, trumpet

West Texas A & M University – Canyon, TX

Source: International Trumpet Guild 2002-2003 Programs

10 September 2002

Animal Ditties VII

Towson Brass Quintet

Towson University – Towson, MD

Source: International Trumpet Guild 2002-2003 Programs

22 September 2002

Music for Brass Octet

Vermont Brass Collective

First Congregational Church – Burlington, VT

Source: International Trumpet Guild 2002-2003 Programs

24 October 2002

Concerto for Two Trumpets

Nick Norton and Peter Margulies, trumpet

Libby Gardner Concert Hall – Salt Lake City, UT

Source: www.americanorchestras.org

26 November 2002

Animal Ditties II

Candace L. Russell, trumpet

University of South Carolina – Columbia, SC

Source: International Trumpet Guild 2002-2003 Programs

4 March 2003

Animal Ditties

Sheena Hyndman, trumpet

University of Alberta – Edmonton, AB

Source: International Trumpet Guild 2002-2003 Programs

¹ Thomas Bacon, Facebook correspondence 11 Aug 2011

1 April 2003
Four Sketches
Southeastern Brass
Pearl River Community College – Poplarville, MS
Source: International Trumpet Guild 2002-2003 Programs

14 April 2003
Suite for Six Trumpets
USM Trumpet Ensemble
University of Southern Mississippi – Hattiesburg, MS
Source: International Trumpet Guild 2002-2003 Programs

31 May 2003
Animal Ditties
George Steward, trumpet
North Seattle Alliance Church – Seattle, WA
Source: International Trumpet Guild 2002-2003 Programs

22 June 2003
Concerto No. 1 for trumpet, brass ensemble, and percussion
Indianapolis Brass Choir & John Rommel, trumpet
Indianapolis, IN
Source: <http://www.trumpetguild.org/>

12 October 2003
Animal Ditties VIII
St. Louis Brass Quintet
University of Louisville – Louisville, KY
Source: International Trumpet Guild 2003-2004 Programs

1 November 2003
Four Sketches
Sonus Brass
Sala José Félix Ribas – Venezuela
Source: International Trumpet Guild 2003-2004 Programs

22 January 2004
Four Themes on Paintings of Edvard Munch
Joel Treybig, trumpet
First Presbyterian Church – Hattiesburg, MS
Source: International Trumpet Guild 2003-2004 Programs

8 February 2004

Animal Ditties VII

Crown City Brass Quintet

St. James Episcopal Church – Newport Beach, CA

Source: International Trumpet Guild 2003-2004 Programs

5 March 2004

Four Sketches

US Army Brass Quintet

Florida State University – Tallahassee, FL

Source: International Trumpet Guild 2003-2004 Programs

27 April 2004

Suite for Six Trumpets

CSU Long Beach Trumpet Choir

California State University Long Beach – Long Beach, CA

Source: International Trumpet Guild 2003-2004 Programs

16 May 2004

Animal Ditties VII

Bloomington Symphony Orchestra Brass Quintet

Bloomington Center for the Arts – Bloomington, IN

Source: International Trumpet Guild 2003-2004 Programs

17 July 2004

Music for Brass Octet

Summer Brass Institute Ensemble

Menlo School – Atherton, CA

Source: International Trumpet Guild 2004-2005 Programs

19 November 2004

Mosaics

FSU Brass Quintet

Florida State University – Tallahassee, FL

Source: International Trumpet Guild 2004-2005 Programs

Spring 2005

Three Miniatures for Tuba

Rob Teehan, tuba

University of Toronto - Toronto, ON

Source: Rob Teehan

29 March 2005

Mini Suite for Brass Quintet

Southern Arts Brass Quintet

University of Southern Mississippi – Hattiesburg, MS

Source: International Trumpet Guild 2004-2005 Programs

10 April 2005

Fanfare for Two Trumpets

Dialogue

John Manning & Eric Miller, trumpets

West Point Military Academy – West Point, NY

Source: International Trumpet Guild 2004-2005 Programs

14 April 2005

Mini-Variations on 'Amazing Grace'

USM Brass Choir

University of Southern Mississippi – Hattiesburg, MS

Source: International Trumpet Guild 2004-2005 Programs

April 2006

Postcards

James Langridge, trumpet

University of Toronto – Toronto, ON

Source: James Langridge

1 June 2007

Four Themes on Paintings of Edvard Munch

Marc Reese, trumpet

University of Massachusetts Amherst - Amherst, MA

Source: Marc Reese

4 December 2007

Contemplations for flugelhorn and wind ensemble

Austin Peay University Wind Ensemble & Richard Steffan, flugelhorn

Austin Peay University – Clarkesville, TN

Source: www.trumpetguild.org

17 January 2008

Animal Ditties I & II

Gillian MacKay, trumpet

University of Toronto – Toronto, ON

Source: Gillian MacKay

9 February 2008

Concerto No. 1 for trumpet and wind ensemble

Toronto University Wind Ensemble & James Thompson, trumpet

University of Toronto – Toronto, ON

Source: www.trumpetguild.org

30 September 2008

Double Concerto for two trumpets and wind ensemble

Indiana University Wind Ensemble & John Rommel and Joey Tartell, trumpet

Indiana University – Bloomington, IN

Source: www.trumpetguild.org

November 2008

Four Sketches

Glenn Gould School Brass Quintet

Glenn Gould School – Toronto, ON

Source: Rob Weymouth

2 September 2009

Animal Ditties II

Joel Brennan, trumpet

Unitarian Universalist Church - Wakefield, MA

Source: Joel Brennan

18 November 2009

Horn Quartet No. 1

Gail Williams, William Caballero, Thomas Bacon, and William Barnewitz, horn

Northwestern University – Evanston, IL

Source: Thomas Bacon

July 2010

Four Sketches

National Youth Orchestra of Canada Brass Quintet

University of Western Ontario - London, ON

Source: Rob Weymouth

Spring 2011

Animal Ditties III

Cara Sawyer, horn

DePaul University - Chicago, IL

Source: Cara Sawyer

14 April 2011

Mosaics

Excalibur Brass Quintet

Yale University - New Haven, CT

Source: Allan Dean

15 July 2011

Scherzo

Bay Brass

Menlo School - Atherton, CA

Source: Rob Roy McGregor

28 August 2011

Animal Ditties II

Joel Brennan, trumpet

Onanole Community Centre - Onanole, MB

Source: Joel Brennan

18, 24, & 25 September 2011

Sierra Journal for soprano, trumpet and orchestra

Immanuel Richer, trumpet

Wil, Kempraten, Wattwil (respectively) – Switzerland

Source: www.editions-bim.com

18 October 2011

Songs of War and Loss

American Brass Quintet & Chris Nomura, baritone

The Juilliard School – New York, NY

Source: Anthony Plog (see Appendix D, Question 10)

22 November 2011

Tuba Quartet "Fantasy Movements"

Sotto Voce Quartet

Madison, WI

Source: Sotto Voce Quartet

Appendix D

Appendix D reports an interview with Anthony Plog via email. The format follows an initial numbered question and the composer's initial response, and a follow-up question and follow-up response when applicable.

Introduction (13 June 2011)

Hello Tony!

Below are many questions for you about your music. I hope I have been specific enough that it will not take you too long to go through this! The thesis title and the works I am investigating are listed for your perusal. I plan to focus on some earlier works since some time and distance has passed since their introductions, allowing for solid establishment as staple works in brass repertoire.

I look forward to your responses! Thank you so very much for your time and efforts herein. -al

1

Initial Question 1 (13 June 2011)

What is your official title at Staatliche Hochschule für Musik Freiburg im Breisgau? Please list a sampling of any courses you teach and ensembles you coach.

Initial Response 1 (19 June 2011)

My official title is Professor. I teach trumpet, and that is all I do. I have occasionally done things like a brass ensemble but that has nothing to do with my official duties.

2

Initial Question 2 (13 June 2011)

What is the origin of your family name (and what is the proper pronunciation, is the "o" hard or soft)? Have you had any cultural musical influences from your family background?

Initial Response 2 (19 June 2011)

I believe my family name comes from Germany. It is pronounced with a long O, and just think of the following: Plog as in toad, not Plog as in frog! My father played in big bands for the first part of his life (trombone), as did my older brother (also trombone).

3

Initial Question 3 (13 June 2011)

Do you play other instruments previously or currently? Have you ever had vocal training of any kind?

Initial Response 3 (19 June 2011)

I played trumpet for almost all of my adult life, but that is the only instrument I played. And I can't sing at all!

4

Initial Question 4 (13 June 2011)

Are there specific genres of music you particularly enjoy listening to? Has this changed over time?

Initial Response 4 (19 June 2011)

I enjoy listening to all genres of music, although a lot of rock music these days seems not too creative (Britney Spears, etc.)

5

Initial Question 5 (13 June 2011)

Please name a couple or handful of composers that have been influential in your writing; are there perhaps specific elements from these writers that you have adapted into your own music?

Initial Response 5 (21 June 2011)

When I think of favorite composers I think I probably view composers as much from the viewpoint of an orchestral trumpet player as a composer. So I would basically list all the standard composers, from Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Mahler, Tchaikowsky, Stravinsky, Prokofieff, etc. What Hesse called the immortals in his book *Steppenwolf* are all great for me. In terms of my own writing, I seem to be drawn to certain things in Stravinsky, Prokofieff, and perhaps a little Shostakovich. But I would not say that any of this is conscious.

Follow-up Question 5 (28 August 2011)

Are there any elements of your composing that you do consciously include? Or do your ears entirely lead the way?

Follow-up Response 5 (31 August 2011)

I don't think that there is anything that I do where I consciously try to copy a composer, with the exception of the end of my Double Concerto (in the last 8 bars the opening of the Vivaldi Double Concerto was quoted, in addition to the final three notes of Pulcinella).

6

Initial Question 6 (13 June 2011)

Do you enjoy performing your own compositions? In the past when preparing for performances of your own works, did you find yourself taking a different approach to your music than that of other composers?

Initial Response 6 (21 June 2011)

With the exception of Animal Ditties, I never really enjoyed playing my own music, but that has to do with my own playing (when I was still a player). As a composer I tend to

write a lot of staccato passages, and those never felt very comfortable to me as a player. I don't think I approached any of my music differently than any other music, but I do think that being a composer made me a better interpreter of other pieces, meaning that I would try to approach things much more from the composers point of view, and that form or structure played a very important part for me when I was playing another composers piece.

7

Initial Question 7 (13 June 2011)

When did you retire from trumpet performing in order to fully pursue composition – was it 2003? Was there a series of events, or even a particular moment, that influenced your making that decision?

Initial Response 7 (21 June 2011)

I actually retired in 2001, and I believe it was June 16, the last concert of a Summit Brass week in Cincinnati. My decision really took a long time, and began with a concert I heard in Dec. 1989 in Berlin (Prokofieff's Romeo and Juliet, the ballet) that made me realize I had to become a composer, or at least try to become a composer. That concert set things in motion, and it took over ten years to finally pull the plug.

8

Initial Question 8 (13 June 2011)

Do you compose for a particular audience? Do you consider your music's reception by typical classical music audiences?

Initial Response 8 (21 June 2011)

I don't write for a particular audience, but I do write so that my music will be heard (and hopefully played!). In other words, I'm not a composer who says they don't care about the audience, that writing music that an audience likes is dumbing down, etc. There are of course people in the audience who don't know anything about music and are there just to be seen, but there are also people in the audience who absolutely love music and have a deep understanding of music, even if they have no formal knowledge. So, for example, right now I am working on my biggest project, an opera based on the holocaust, and I think this will be a difficult piece for the audience. But I am still writing this piece for the audience, just like an author writes a book with the intention or hope that it will be read.

9

Initial Question 9 (13 June 2011)

Would you categorize your music as “new” or “contemporary?” Are there any particular similar labels you might apply to your music?

Initial Response 9 (21 June 2011)

I don't think I would put any label on my music, and if somebody else did I'm not sure what that label would be. I tend to write in a much more conservative manner than most of the composers who are being performed by major orchestras these days, but an awful lot of this music is performed once and then forgotten. So I'm really not sure what kind of

composer I am. As Paddy Chayefsky once said, "I just try to do a good day's work."

10

Initial Question 10 (13 June 2011)

What works have been completed, premiered, and/or published between 2009-Present?

Initial Response 10 (5 July 2011)

- Horn Quartet #1 has been recorded for an album by Gail Williams
- The Trumpet Sonata was premiered a number of years ago by Ray and Jeanne Sasaki. I waited many years before doing revisions but it is now published by Editions BIM (but no recording yet).
- The Jocaan Trio was premiered in 2010 but has not been recorded
- The Short Meditation was also premiered and has been published by Editions BIM but not recorded (there is also a version for 12 celli)
- The Concerto 2010 was premiered in 2010 and has been recorded by the Texas Christian U Wind Ensemble and the American BQ but this recording has not yet been released.

I also have several other works that will be coming out:

- Sierra Journal for Soprano, Trumpet, Strings and Percussion, which was premiered in 1985, was revised just a few months ago and will be given its European premier in Switzerland in Sept. 2011
- Also Songs of War and Loss for baritone and brass quintet, which resulted from a grant from Chamber Music American and will be premiered in Oct. 2011
- Postcards for bass trombone, premiered by Randy Hawes
- Thoughts for Trumpet and Organ, premiered by John Coulton and David Dunnett.

Follow-up Question 10 (28 August 2011)

Who is premiering *Songs of War and Loss*? Where?

Do you know of any new recordings being released this year or next, other than the *Concerto 2010*?

Did the Texas Christian U Wind Ensemble and the ABQ also premiere the *Concerto 2010*? Where and when?

Who premiered the *Short Meditation for 12 Euphoniums/Trombones*? Where and when?

Who premiered the *Jocaan Trio*? Where and when? Do you know if anyone has plans to record this?

Follow-up Response 10 (31 August 2011)

Songs of War and Loss will be premiered Oct. 18, 2011 at the Julliard School by the American Brass Quintet and Chris Nomura.

Gail Williams recorded the Horn Quartet #1, which was recently released.

TCU and the ABQ did perform the Concerto 2010 at Carnegie Hall in Feb. and recorded the work several months later, but the premier was the previous October by the ABQ and Old Dominion College.

Short Meditation was premiered by Travis Scott and his euphonium group but I'm not exactly sure where or when (but about 6 or so months ago)

Jocaa Trio was premiered last Sept. in Nashville, but it has not been recorded.

11

Initial Question 11 (13 June 2011)

Your compositions seem to grow from rhythmic motives. Many people I've talked about your music with describe your music akin to Stravinsky's due to his compositions being heavily formed by motivic rhythmic structures and shifting pulse in melodic material.

Do you see your writing approach as being akin to Stravinsky's writing approach? Do you start by writing motivic material and develop your compositions from there?

Initial Response 11 (5 July 2011)

I guess that my music is in a way like Stravinsky's in terms of rhythm and motives, but that is all unconscious. There are a lot of great 20th century composers whose work tends to be very rhythmic (Stravinsky, Prokofieff, Britten, Copland, etc) and I would think that in a certain way all of those (and other) composers have influenced me, if not directly then at least indirectly.

12

Initial Question 12 (13 June 2011)

I've noted that your compositions, whether for a single or many instruments, have some kind of tonal centre. Melodic lines often outline clear major or minor triads. Yet, looking at your music on a more general scale, you do not write in more traditional diatonic modes, including elements of octatonic and whole tone scales, for example. Chromatic scales abound (often to lead to and/or establish a tonal centre). Do you agree with this assessment? Is your avoidance of traditional harmonic writing intentional?

Initial Response 12 (5 July 2011)

When I write I may think of a tonal center but, since I am not really trained as a composer, I don't think in perhaps the traditional terms of what particular scale I will use, etc. Sometimes when I see a work of mine analyzed I tend to think, "did I really do that? That sounds impressive." So usually my approach is that I simply use my ears and (hopefully) good sense to decide if something works in terms of tonality or key center. And I'm not quite sure how I feel about tonality, but I basically do write with a key center in mind.

13

Initial Question 13 (13 June 2011)

Your orchestration is often the key to the various colors established in your music, along with mute usage and the unusual crossing of tessitura. Further, color is also influenced by harmonic consonance and dissonance. For me, these are the landmark characteristics that make Tony Plog's music so recognizable, and importantly, rewarding to practice and perform as well as listen to.

During composing, how important are these elements of timbre and texture? It seems to me they are the most important elements of your compositions collectively. How do you sift through these endless possibilities for colors and arrive at the "correct" ones - is it a lot of experimentation of voicing? Or perhaps you already have the desired effect in your mind and simply write it down? Do you experiment – for example, have performers play sets of pitches with different mutes, and then rearrange voicing tessitura, or dynamics?

Initial Response 13 (5 July 2011)

In terms of writing different colors and/or textures/timbres, I don't experiment at all (outside of the fact that after the premier of a piece I might make a few changes). And I'm not sure that there is such a thing (at least with me) as a "correct" color - instrumentation is just a choice I make at the time and somehow I think that part of composition comes fairly easily for me. I have actually thought that being a composer who is able to write with a lot of color contrasts is not always such a good thing, because interesting colors can sometimes hide the fact that there is maybe not much substance in a piece. So I have actually written several pieces (Trombone Quartet, "Densities" and the brass quintet Mosaics) where I tried to write as few colors as possible, more in the style of a string quartet which, compared to the brass with its use of mutes and different sounding instruments, has a wider variety of colors.

14

Initial Question 14 (21 August 2011)

You have entitled many works with nouns that might incite visual or tactile sensation. These titles might give a listener particular connotations about your music before hearing even one note. Do you intend for your works' titles to influence a performer's interpretation? Or are they perhaps generic with no particular intent?

- ie Functional titles: Concerto, Sonata, Nocturne, etc.
- ie "Noun" titles: Dialogues, Mosaics, Sketches, Postcards, Textures, Statements, etc.

Do you consider any of your music to be programmatic? (ie Munch and Goya Paintings, others as well?)

Initial Response 14 (28 August 2011)

I have always felt that I have been very poor with titles. In truth, what happens with "Noun" titles is that I really can't think of a better title and, in the case of Mosaics, my publisher suggested that I not have a title like Brass Quintet #2. In terms of the other pieces you listed most of the titles in a way describe the piece. The one exception is

postcards, which started when I started sending funny postcards to Gabriele Cassone, such as Salt Lake City by night (completely black), bikini beauties in Malibu, etc. When he finally asked me to write a solo piece for him I thought that Postcards would be a good title, 1) because of our joke with postcards, and 2) because a postcard is something small, quite unlike a letter, which is much more detailed and lengthy. Ditto for the piece, which is relatively short.

I don't consider the Munch and Goya to be programmatic, but rather musical depictions or interpretations of how a particular picture resonates with me. And when I write for voice (either narrator or singer) then of course the text influences what I write. The same goes for opera (I'm not sure if I sent you material about my operas, but I will include a synopsis of the opera I am currently composing).

Follow-up Question 14 (28 August 2011)

I'm surprised by your answer about "noun" titles! I think they are inviting – definitive enough to give an idea of texture and length, but subtle enough that they let the music speak for itself. Thanks for including the story about *Postcards* and Gabriele Cassone!

Munch and Goya – depictions/interpretations as opposed to programmatic – noted!

Thank you for the new opera's synopsis, I look forward to hearing this work.

Follow-up Response 14 (31 August 2011)

Thank you, and you're welcome! Regarding the opera, if you look forward to hearing it, well, then, I look forward to finishing it!

15

Initial Question 15 (21 August 2011)

While composing do you consider the approachability of your music in terms of difficulty, or is execution of the music heavily the responsibility of the performer? For commissioned works, do you keep in mind particular strengths or weaknesses of the performers you are writing for?

Initial Response 15 (28 August 2011)

Good question, and I find that I am guilty of writing music that at the time I think is not very difficult and later I hear that it is actually quite difficult. For example, just after I wrote the Trumpet Concerto #2 I was concerned that it was not difficult enough (in other words, that it would be boring for the performer). But as soon as I heard from the soloist, Nick Norton (still one of my closest friends), I realized that I had actually written a piece that was almost too difficult (even though he did an amazing job with it).

In a way, I do write for the strengths of specific players, but I am always thinking that I would like the piece to be played by as many players as possible (if the piece is deserving of further performances), so I am not the type of composer who will write something that only an all star player can play. At least that is my hope.

Follow-up Question 15 (28 August 2011)

So do you generally equate a performer's interest in a work with the challenges it presents? Why do you think there is so much interest in your music by brass players you do not personally know?

Can you perhaps cite a specific instance where you wrote for the strength of a specific player? Perhaps an attribute of Cassone with *Postcards*, or Hickman with the *Concerto No. 1*?

Follow-up Response 15 (31 August 2011)

I'm actually not sure why brass players like my music. But in general we have a weak repertoire (when, for example, compared with voice or piano or strings), so there is, in a way, less competition. But other than that, no idea.

Actually, the one time where I wrote for a specific strength of a player was the Trumpet Concerto #1. Doc Severinsen was supposed to do the premier and also record it (he dropped out of the project) and the first version of the piece had more high notes. But that was an earlier piece, and I no longer try to write for a player's technical ability. Sometimes when a player is a very lyrical player (as an example, the hornist Gail Williams) I will tend to write more lyrical passages.

16

Initial Question 16 (21 August 2011)

Stravinsky stated: "To interpret a piece is to realize its portrait, and what I demand is the realization of the piece itself and not of its portrait." Do you generally subscribe to the idea that music speaks for itself through all markings and indications in a score? Do you think your works require interpretation? If yes, how so? - i.e. in the areas of timbre, dynamics, phrasing, balance among multiple instruments?

Initial Response 16 (28 August 2011)

I think Stravinsky is completely wrong, and proof comes from Stravinsky himself. As an example, he used to conduct the Chicago Symphony, and over the course of a week of concerts (Thursday through Sunday) players said that tempi and other ideas always changed in the course of the week. So of course a piece needs interpretation, that's what makes things interesting. For example, I have a piece for tuba entitled 3 Miniatures that has been recorded a number of times. The opening movement is an allegro, and when I composed it I had a specific tempo in my mind (without consciously realizing it). The piece has had several recordings where the tempo is extremely fast, much faster than the way I conceived the piece, and although it then makes the piece a bit different from my original conception the piece still works. But as a general idea, I think that most brass players need to be more observant of the softer dynamics (for example, I heard *Postcards* a number of years ago at an international competition in Toulon, France. The last movement has a number of passages that are marked *pp*. Perhaps that dynamic is not really possible, considering the context of the passages, but even so the softest dynamic I heard for those passages was *mf*).

Follow-up Question 16 (28 August 2011)

So it seems that tempos, volume-determined environment, and volume are aspects musicians tend to interpret differently from yourself. Rhythm is essentially right or wrong since it cannot be interpreted. What about tonality? Below is an assertion made in my paper – based on this excerpt, do you think tonality in your music “regulates the progress of the music towards moments of arrival?”

“Brian Hyer’s article “Tonality” in the New Grove Online cites tonality as a component capable of defining the predictable or unpredictable nature of music.

In its power to form musical goals and regulate the progress of the music towards... moments of arrival, tonality has become, in Western culture, the principal musical means with which to manage expectation and structure desire.

Just as with the most standard diatonic major tonality, Tony Plog’s tonality indeed manages musical expectation. Tonality informs the journey through the music. Tonal center, use of particular chords, and various scales and modes define Plog’s tonality and influence notions of predictability in the selected works. But these means by which Plog arrives at tonality are not always predictable in their own right – tonal ambiguity and unpredictability reveals the witty nature of his music.”

Follow-up Response 16 (31 August 2011)

Well, what you wrote is probably right and probably much too nice. But at least as a trumpet teacher I tell my students that trumpet players tend to only phrase by melody, when harmony can be a big help for phrasing as well.

17

Initial Question 17a (21 August 2011)

Have you heard performances of your music that struck you as poorly interpreted?

Initial Response 17a (28 August 2011)

Yes, I have heard performances of my music that have been poorly interpreted, but that almost always is my fault as a composer. For example, since you mention Four Sketches, quite often I hear the first movement played way too loud and heavy. The movement should be light and intricate, at any rate that was my intention. I just assumed that players would realize that and did not put something like "light" or "not aggressive", or whatever over the f passages. My fault.

Initial Question 17b (21 August 2011)

How do you find the following scenarios?

Example A: In *Four Sketches* in the opening of the second movement, would it be poor interpretation on the part of the trumpet players to use mutes of different timbres? On the one hand, the line you've written for the two trumpets is essentially one line divided between two players, and should sound like one instrument. On the other hand, the aesthetic here could be vastly altered using different mutes. Is this kind of interpretation out of the question in your mind? - what are your thoughts for and against this kind of alteration?

Example B: In *Four Sketches* in the third movement, there are some phrases that double in two instruments (such as trumpet 2 and tuba). In order to create a unique timbre for the total produced sound, would it be acceptable for an ensemble to increase the dynamic of one instrument over the other (such as the tuba at mf, and the trumpet at pp as a colouring of the tuba sound)?

Initial Response 17b (28 August 2011)

a) for me, this is rather obvious that it is one line that is shared by the two trumpets, so with this particular example I would have to assume that the players should realize that.

b) yes, of course, whatever an ensemble or player has to do to have a better balance, then that is what should be done. And to me that is an aspect of interpretation - the inner balance between instruments. For example, in the last movement of the Samuel Barber Capricorn Concerto there is a slow passage with trumpet, oboe, and flute in 4/4 with just quarter notes. The way it is written the highest note from any of the three instruments on each quarter note is the melody from earlier in the movement. So obviously that note would have to be played louder (although Barber makes no note of this).

18

Initial Question 18 (13 June 2011)

I believe dynamics should be matched across the ensemble in your brass compositions. I've observed in your scores that dynamics are ballpark guidelines for the entire ensemble (when multiple instruments share a "forte" marking, the sound produced should be a "forte" in total, and not interpreted as a "forte" per instrument). Is this a correct interpretation of dynamics in your brass music?

Initial Response 18 (10 July 2011)

This is a question I have not really considered before, but I would agree with you that if a brass ensemble, for example, has a single dynamic then this dynamic should be balanced across the entire ensemble. Occasionally I will write different dynamics for the same passage in order to get a particular effect, but normally my dynamics should be balanced.

Follow-up Question 18 (28 August 2011)

"Occasionally write different dynamics..." – such as? I've been looking but can't find any examples! Can you think of any instances in your brass music?

Follow-up Reply 18 (31 August 2011)

For example, in a very early fanfare I wrote (published by Trigram Music and recorded on Crystal) there is a passage where one trumpet has a crescendo while the other stays the same dynamic, meaning that one becomes more hectic and agitated while the other remains calm.

19

Initial Question 19 (13 June 2011)

I also believe that articulation should be matched across the ensemble, especially during ostinato patterns and passages with consistent and/or fast tonguing. Is this a correct interpretation of articulations? Are accent marks ever redundant and unnecessary due to rhythmic shifting, or the presence of rests before the appearance of an accent mark?

When performing a passage of constant 8th or 16th notes, such as in the 2nd movement of 4 Sketches between the two trumpets, would you use any of these words to describe the articulation? – staccato, detached, pointed, deliberate, exaggerated, energetic, electronic. Are there better words to describe your tongued passages for brass players?

Initial Response 19 (10 July 2011)

Articulations should be matched as well. Perhaps accents are redundant, but my general feeling is that usually when I write an accent there is a specific reason for it (quite often rhythmic) and that therefore it would not be redundant. But perhaps I have misunderstood your question. I really can't think of specific words to describe in general tongued passages in my works because everything depends on the context of the piece or section of the piece in question. Since you mentioned the second movement of the Four Sketches I would say that energetic might be a good word, but when I write I don't think in those terms at all.

Follow-up Question 19 (28 August 2011)

I'm sorry, I poorly phrased my question about accent markings, it was incomplete! I was trying to ask if accent marks are ever written for reasons other than rhythmic emphasis? Do articulations in your music affect timbre?

Follow-up Response 19 (31 August 2011)

Yes, articulations can affect timbre. And occasionally accents can be used to give a more aggressive feel. I think I probably use accents more for rhythm than a lot of composers, but I can also use them to help with the more aggressive nature of a passage.

20

Initial Question 20 (13 June 2011)

The variations of the above-mentioned texture and timbre are most important to the aesthetic result of your works. For me, the main appeal of your music is the juxtaposition between a few elements that require precise reading of the manuscripts (ie rhythm and articulation) and the endless interpretive possibilities of color achieved through the balancing of voices. An ensemble can give a unique interpretation of your brass chamber

music while remaining absolutely true to the manuscripts.

What do you make of this assertion? Am I inserting too much interpretation into your music by taking this approach?

Initial Response 20 (10 July 2011)

I think I agree with what you say, but that can be applied to most composers. There are certain composers, such as Stravinsky, who require less interpretation because of the way their music is composed, and others like Mahler where there is a huge amount of room for different interpretations. I do find that with some works I am not specific enough with my notation and that is a failing of mine. For example, when I wrote the first movement of the Four Sketches and for certain passages wrote a *f* dynamic I just naturally assumed that *f* would be taken with a grain of salt, meaning that the overall feel of the movement should be light and compact. But I have heard a lot of interpretations where *f* is played in a very loud and aggressive manner, which to me means that I should have either written *mf* or perhaps *f* but lightly played.

21

Initial Question 21 (1 September 2011)

In the *Trio for Brass*, is “optional trumpet” added to make the work more accessible / add purchase appeal to the publication?

Initial Response 21 (2 September 2011)

yes, the idea is that the piece be accessible to as many players as possible

22

Initial Question 22 (1 September 2011)

In the opening cadenza of the *Concerto No. 1*, I think that the alternative fingerings, combined with the offstage playing, are there primarily to allow the performer to manipulate color. Is this assessment accurate? How so, or not?

Can color be prioritized here instead of intonation, or is precise intonation required regardless of the fingerings?

Initial Response 22 (2 September 2011)

In regards to the beginning of *Concerto #1* I wasn't thinking so much of colors, but rather more of the idea of some sort of ancient voice (perhaps coming from the mountains). I love the beginning of the Britten Serenade, especially the notes that are out of tune, and so precise intonation was not my goal.

23

Initial Question 23 (1 September 2011)

In the very fast runs of the third movement of the *Concerto No. 1*, should the performer produce every pitch at an even tempo, or is it more like Strauss' *Don Juan* effect for the violins – all about gesture?

Initial Response 23 (2 September 2011)

My idea was that the runs should be as clear as possible, rather than just an effect. But I also realize the difficulty of the passage.

24

Initial Question 24 (1 September 2011)

I am focusing quite a lot on the lack of predictability in your music - I think it's one of the big reasons for your music's appeal. There is also humor and sometimes irony in your music, brought on by the unpredictability and other factors such as dissonance. Do you have any thoughts on these ideas? - would you describe your music as humorous or ironic at times?

Initial Response 24 (2 September 2011)

I'm not sure if I would describe my music as ironic, but I do think there are moments or passages that definitely contain humor, sometimes subtle and sometimes not so subtle. And I could be wrong about this, but if you would talk with some of my friends I think they would probably say I'm a pretty funny guy.

In regards to predictability, to my own ear I guess that almost everything sounds predictable, since I struggled with the writing of whatever piece is being discussed. So to hear you say that my music sounds unpredictable is to me a great compliment. I remember the only time I was upset with a bad review was a review I got in the ITG (I think), and I think it was a review of a CD the Summit Brass did of my music. I forget exactly what the reviewer said, but he mentioned something like a big failing of mine was that a listener had no idea of the form of any of my music. What upset me was that, in my mind at least, the big failure of my music (at least the music on that CD) was that the form was TOO easy to hear.