A Performance Guide to Selected Trumpet Excerpts from the Orchestral Music of John Coolidge Adams

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A doctoral essay submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

A PERFORMANCE GUIDE TO SELECTED TRUMPET EXCERPTS FROM THE ORCHESTRAL MUSIC OF JOHN COOLIDGE ADAMS

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The purpose of this study is to create a performance guide for the challenging trumpet parts found within the orchestral works of John Coolidge Adams. Because Adams’s music has found a place in today’s standard orchestral repertoire, as well as on some principal trumpet audition lists, it is important for contemporary trumpet players to recognize the intricacies, innovations, and difficulties encountered within his trumpet music. The historical, theoretical, and performance elements of Adams’s trumpet writing are analyzed, with the objective of developing a clear understanding of how to approach and interpret Adams’s trumpet music.

This study presents an overview of the trumpet parts found in Adams’s music from 1979-2013, highlighting the characteristics of his style of trumpet writing. Eight of Adams’s most challenging trumpet parts were selected for in-depth examination. This essay presents background information, performance considerations, and practice recommendations for Harmonielehre (1985), Tromba lontana (1985), Short Ride in a Fast Machine (1986), The Wound-Dresser (1988), On the Transmigration of Souls (2002), My Father Knew Charles Ives (2003), Doctor Atomic Symphony (2007), and City Noir (2009). This document also includes an appendix listing all of the required mutes, as well as the trumpet ranges for each Adams composition. This essay advances the study and awareness of Adams’s entire oeuvre and its trumpet parts.
DEDICATION

To the memory of my mother, Dolores Cekus-Shefcik, whose life was a shining example of love, perseverance, and creativity, and to my father, James M. Shefcik, whose boundless gifts of love, sacrifice, and support allow me to follow my dreams.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Critics and audiences consider John Coolidge Adams (b. 1947) the present-day face of American classical music. Adams, like Aaron Copland and Leonard Bernstein before him, presents an American musical populism that attracts praise from both concertgoers and critics. Adams is an active, in-demand composer who regularly receives commissions from ensembles such as the San Francisco Symphony, the San Francisco Opera, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the New York Philharmonic, the Baltimore Symphony, the St. Louis Symphony, the Houston Grand Opera, the Milwaukee Symphony, the London Symphony Orchestra, the BBC Symphony, the Orchestra of St. Luke’s, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and the Sydney Symphony. Many of Adams’s compositions include trumpet parts that test the orchestral trumpeter’s musical, technical, and physical abilities. Some of these compositions have recently appeared on principal trumpet audition lists for major symphony orchestras, speaking to the musical quality and technical challenges encountered in his trumpet music. This also attests to the widespread acceptance Adams has attained as a composer of contemporary orchestral and operatic music. This study will focus on the performance issues


3 Adams’s Doctor Atomic Symphony and City Noir appeared on the 2011 principal trumpet audition repertoire lists for the Saint Louis Symphony and Los Angeles Philharmonic, respectively. The author personally examined both repertoire lists.
surrounding the trumpet parts found within John Adams’s music. In addition to looking at the characteristic elements and style of his trumpet music throughout his oeuvre, this study will focus on eight of his compositions: Harmonielehre (1984-1985), Tromba Lontana (1985), Short Ride in a Fast Machine (1986), The Wound Dresser (1988), On The Transmigration of Souls (2002), My Father Knew Charles Ives (2003), Doctor Atomic Symphony (2007), and City Noir (2009). These works test the performer’s technical and musical abilities, as they contain various combinations of extended solos, long fatiguing lines, and rhythmic challenges. The preparation of these works also requires a logical approach to dealing with both the practical and technical issues surrounding each piece.

**Background About the Composer**

Born in Worcester, Massachusetts, John Coolidge Adams is the son of Carl and Elinore Adams, both of whom were musically inclined. His father was an amateur clarinetist and saxophonist, while his mother was an amateur singer. Under his father’s instruction, Adams learned to play the clarinet. He completed his first compositions at the age of ten. During his teenage years, Adams gained his first experiences as a conductor, leading orchestras and ensembles at summer camps. He later earned both a bachelor’s and master’s degree from Harvard, where he studied with Leon Kirchner and Earl Kim. While at Harvard, Adams was exposed to the music of John Cage and Terry Riley. In 1971, he settled in San Francisco, California, where he was further influenced by the music of Steve Reich and Philip Glass. Adams later secured a teaching position

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at the San Francisco Conservatory, and from 1982-1985, held the title of Composer-in-Residence for the San Francisco Symphony. Several works commissioned by the San Francisco Symphony helped him earn worldwide recognition as a composer. In the three decades since Adams’s rise to prominence, he has become an active conductor, leading performances of top-tier orchestras around the world. He is also known for his imaginative concert programming, having held positions as Music Director of the Cabrillo Music Festival and Creative Chair of the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. Currently, Adams is Creative Chair for the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

Alexander Sanchez-Behar asserts that there are four compositional periods within John Adams’s career. The first of these periods takes place from 1970-1977 and is highly experimental, owing much to the music of Reich. The second period, spanning from 1977-1987, is highlighted by minimalism, with a move towards post-minimalism. The music of this period prompted some writers to refer to Adams as a “second-generation minimalist.” During this period, Adams cultivated a following among conventional classical audiences by fusing emotional undercurrents with the processes of traditional minimalism. His second period culminates with the composition of his opera

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Nixon in China (1987), quite possibly his most famous work. Adams’s third period (1987-1992) is marked by a transition away from standard minimalist procedures in favor of contrapuntal writing. Adams writes that the fundamental procedure of minimalism involves “building large, expressive structures by the repetition of small elements.”

The “monolithic” nature of most minimalist music is, according to Adams, responsible for “both the brilliance of the style’s originality and the conundrum of how to make it evolve into a language of greater subtlety.” According to Sanchez-Behar, “in [Adams’s] post-minimal works, musical processes exhibit greater freedom and the musical style is more personal.” In his fourth period, starting in 1992 with the composition of Chamber Symphony and continuing to the present, Adams focuses primarily on contrapuntal textures, often avoiding the harmonic structures that are closely tied to minimalism. The strong influences of composers such as Charles Ives, Arnold Schoenberg, Aaron Copland, and Igor Stravinsky, coupled with elements of romantic, jazz, rock, and Eastern folk music, are present in his fourth-period compositions. Today, Adams’s pieces are among the most widely programed works of active American-born composers.

While orchestras and opera companies the world over have performed Adams’s music, his compositions have not been without their share of criticism or controversy. In regards to his Harmonielehre, Adams was accused of focusing on style over substance. It has been suggested that parts of his Grand Pianola Music (1982) are reliant on “kitsch.” Adams has also faced controversy with the subject matter of The Death of Klinghoffer.

10 Adams, Hallelujah Junction, 93.

11 Ibid.


13 Carl, 52.
an opera which gives voice to both the victims and terrorists involved in the 1985 hijacking of an Italian cruise ship, the Achille Lauro. Soon after the events of September 11, 2001, the opera’s provocative subject matter resulted in the Boston Symphony’s cancellation of scheduled performances of choruses from *The Death of Klinghoffer*. Adams is not immune to occasional negative reviews and polemics; however, he is still in high demand around the globe as both a composer and a conductor.

Adams’s status as a sought-after, popular composer is significant to orchestral trumpeters, since many of his compositions include trumpet parts that feature extensive solos, challenging technical passages, and multiple sections that test a player’s stamina and musicality. Some notable pieces from his second and third compositional periods that include such trumpet parts are *Harmonielehre*, which has an extended lyrical solo in the second movement, *Tromba lontana*, written for two antiphonal trumpets and orchestra, *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*, which includes complex rhythms and long, tiring stretches of high, percussive articulations, *The Wound Dresser*, a work that pairs a baritone soloist with a prominent piccolo trumpet solo, and *El Dorado* (1991), one of the few works in the symphonic repertoire that calls for flugelhorn. Important fourth-period trumpet parts can be found in the Pulitzer-prize winning work, *On the Transmigration of Souls*, as well as in *My Father Knew Charles Ives*. Both of these compositions contain lyrical trumpet solos that are central to each piece. Additionally, Adams’s *Doctor Atomic* calls for the principal trumpet to perform the dramatic aria, “Batter My Heart,” while in the third movement of *City Noir*, he gives the trumpet a jazz-inspired,

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improvisatory-like solo. Adams is a composer of important contemporary orchestral works that typically feature substantial trumpet parts. The limited research regarding the complexities and significance of these works necessitates further study.

**Justification of the Study**

According to Craig Morris, Principal Trumpet of the Cabrillo Festival Orchestra and former Principal Trumpet of the Chicago Symphony, with *Doctor Atomic Symphony* and *City Noir*, John Adams has “written the top two trumpet solos in the entire [orchestral] literature.”¹⁵ Furthermore, Michael Sachs, Principal Trumpet of the Cleveland Orchestra, has called the “Batter My Heart” solo from *Doctor Atomic Symphony* a “wonderful aria” that he often plays in order to test the lyrical capabilities of a particular trumpet.¹⁶ Sachs, in his own published excerpt book, goes so far as to include some excerpts from both Adams’s *Doctor Atomic Symphony* and *The Wound Dresser*.¹⁷ It is notable that out of the 36 composers whose works appear in Sachs’s book, Adams is the only composer who is alive today. The importance of Adams’s trumpet writing is further exemplified by the fact that excerpts from *Doctor Atomic Symphony* and *City Noir* have appeared on recent principal trumpet audition lists for the Saint Louis Symphony and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, respectively.

While Sachs’s orchestral trumpet excerpt book presents two Adams compositions, these excerpts are limited because they fail to cover all of the technical challenges found

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within each piece. For example, Sachs’s book does not include the first trumpet solos from the mm. 228-265 of *Doctor Atomic Symphony*. This passage, with its rhythmic complexity and large intervalllic leaps, was challenging enough to be included on the recent Saint Louis Symphony trumpet audition mentioned above.

Due to the recent publication dates and rental status of some of his works, many trumpet players, as well as most trumpet students, are unaware of some or all of the challenges found in Adams’s trumpet music. While there have been dissertations written about specific Adams pieces, as well as his use of rhythm, counterpoint, and harmony, there is no study that focuses on his trumpet music. An examination of the trumpet literature of Igor Stravinsky has been previously conducted, and a similar study of Adams’s music would foster a greater understanding of his approach to trumpet writing. By giving exposure to the intricacies of his trumpet music, both students and performers will be able to understand Adams’s influences and develop more informed performances of his compositions. Knowledge of the innovations and challenges found in his music can expand pedagogical and performance approaches to contemporary trumpet audition preparations. Additionally, an analysis of Adams’s lesser-known trumpet parts may encourage further study and reveal new challenges.

Significant orchestral works by important contemporary American composers are often underrepresented in trumpet pedagogy, as most excerpt books do not include the works of living composers. This document examines Adams’s music and offers professional and aspiring trumpet players suggestions in the areas of practicing, interpretation, and problem solving. As a result, this study develops the groundwork for

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18 Gary Curtiss Mortenson, “The Varied Role of the Trumpet in the Musical Textures of Igor Stravinsky” (DMA diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1984), 1.
an annotated excerpt book of Adams’s trumpet music. This study also provides a foundation for future inquiry into the compositions of Adams and his contemporaries.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to create a performance guide for the challenging trumpet parts found within the works of John Coolidge Adams. Because Adams’s music has found a place in today’s standard orchestral repertoire, it is important for contemporary trumpet players to recognize the intricacies, innovations, and difficulties encountered within his trumpet music. The historical, theoretical, and performance elements of Adams’s trumpet writing are analyzed, with the objective of developing a clear understanding of how to approach and interpret Adams’s trumpet music.

**Research Questions**

1. Which of John Adams’s works are most important to trumpet players?
2. What are some factors that influence how John Adams approaches the writing of his trumpet parts?
3. What are some of the common characteristics found in the trumpet parts of John Adams’s music?
4. What are some innovations or challenges that John Adams presents in his trumpet parts, and how can they be used to further the study and performance of his music?
Delimitations

This study addresses the most challenging aspects of Adams’s orchestral and operatic trumpet parts from his second, third, and fourth-period works (up to 2013). The trumpet parts of eight Adams compositions are examined: Harmonielehre, Tromba lontana, Short Ride in a Fast Machine, The Wound Dresser, On The Transmigration of Souls, My Father Knew Charles Ives, Doctor Atomic Symphony, and City Noir. This document discusses innovative and/or characteristic elements from his other trumpet parts in order to fully comprehend his style of trumpet writing. This study is intended to present material and analysis to assist both professional and aspiring orchestral trumpet players in the approach to preparation and performance of Adams’s music.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter gives a summary of the prior research and writings that pertain to John Adams’s music and the study of his trumpet parts. The chapter is divided into four sections, beginning with a discussion of sources that present background information about Adams and his compositions. The second section of this chapter focuses on sources that deal with the analysis of different elements of his music. Next, the third section addresses sources that consider his trumpet writing. The chapter concludes with an outline of previous writings that deal with the study of orchestral trumpet parts beyond the scope of Adams’s music.

Sources that Present Information about John Adams and His Compositions

Due to the fact the John Adams is an active, contemporary composer, there exists a wide variety of writings, interviews, videos, and websites that present his biographical information and provide background regarding his works. For the purposes of this study, this section will focus on those sources that offer biographical, historical, or philosophical information that leads to a greater understanding of Adams and his trumpet music.

May’s 2006 collection of interviews and essays functions as a sort of Festschrift for Adams.19 The various authors within this collection provide valuable historical information, critical reviews, and analyses of Adams, his career, and his music. This source also contains a list of Adams’s complete works (up to 2006). The works list is

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particularly important in that it includes instrumentation, premiere dates, and recording information. This collection includes two trumpet-related items that are mentioned in the third section of this chapter.

Adams’s 2008 autobiography, *Hallelujah Junction*, is an invaluable source for information about his life, his development as a composer, and his philosophical views about music, composition, and art. Adams provides a narrative that explains how various situations, choices, and compositional influences led him to write his musical works. The composer also addresses both the positive and negative reactions his audiences and critics have had towards his compositions. In addition to giving insight into his compositional style, this source also presents some information regarding his use of the trumpet in specific pieces, as well as his general use of brass instruments.

Adams’s official website includes a biography, works list, his own blog, and links to both print and video interviews. This site also includes program notes and instrumentation information about his compositions. Links to his publishing companies, management, recordings, and writings are also presented on this website. The program notes found on this site contain important information regarding the influences on some of the trumpet solos in Adams’s music. His blog can also be used to track his recent activities and current projects.

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Sources that Analyze Aspects of John Adams’s Music

With Adams’s prolific career, it is no surprise that there are several dissertations and journal articles that focus on various compositional facets of his music. Carl’s 1990 case study of six American composers includes his observations about Adams’s compositional style.22 Carl, who refers to Adams as a “second-generation minimalist,” states that elements of romanticism can be found in Adams’s music. Carl also discusses how the composer’s blending of minimalist and romantic features sometimes results in “kitsch” rather than “profundity.”23 At the same time, Carl point out that Adams’s use of “kitsch” ideas can actually result in “genuine wit,” such as in The Chairman Dances (1985) or Short Ride in a Fast Machine.24

The first analysis of Adams’s use of tonality was authored by Chute in 1991.25 In this study, Chute discusses Adams’s approach to tonality in Shaker Loops (1978), Harmonium (1980-81), and The Chairman Dances in order to demonstrate how tonality plays a role in postmodern music. Chute uses a broad definition of tonality because Adams’s music does not conform to all of the rules of traditional tonal systems.26 The author is able to demonstrate Adams’s proclivity to use tonal centers and tonal elements through harmonic analysis of these three early Adams compositions. At the same time, Chute shows how Adams often obfuscates cadential-like sections and traditional

22 Carl, 51-54.

23 Ibid., 52.

24 Ibid., 53.


26 Ibid., ii.
harmonic functions by placing dominant tones or chords on unaccented beats. Chute concludes that while Adams’s melodic material does not often utilize traditional diatonic scalar functions, the composer still creates dramatic moments through the use of energetic rhythms and syncopation.

In 1993, Johnson looked at the harmonic hierarchy of Adams’s music through the carefully defined concepts of chord, sonority, field, and complex. The smallest unit of this harmonic hierarchy is the chord, made up of a triad or seventh chord, while the largest unit is the complex, consisting of a chord, all diatonic pitches relating to the chord, and any emphasized non-diatonic tones. The author argues that common harmonic analysis systems, such as roman-numeral analysis, neighbor note method, and modal method, are not perfect fits for Adams’s music. Johnson suggests a fourth way of looking at Adams’s music that uses a combination of chord root identification, chord type labeling, and mode classification. The author analyzes Adams’s piano piece, Phrygian Gates (1978), and demonstrates how diatonic pitch-class emphasis and fluctuations between different complexes are a key characteristic of Adams’s second-period pieces.

Jemian’s 2001 analysis focuses on rhythm in John Adams’s music.

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27 Chute, 141.
28 Ibid., 149.
30 Ibid., 117.
31 Ibid., 127.
32 Ibid., 150.
looks at the rhythmic system used by Adams in *Shaker Loops*, as well as the rhythmic organization found in works by George Crumb and Elliott Carter. The author uses the ideas of timepoints, which deal with the specific events in a musical work, periodicity, the measure of time between timepoints and reiterations of phrases, and alignment, the relationship between musical foreground and rhythmic framework.\(^{34}\) Jemian discusses how Adams’s use of “modules” and aleatoric components, when aligned, create timepoints, while unaligned moments help to move the music forward.\(^{35}\)

In 2002, Simmons utilized cellular analysis to study the melodic material found in the vocal parts of John Adams’s *Harmonium*.\(^{36}\) The author also discusses some of the relationships between the composition’s vocal and instrumental parts. Simmons’ analysis reveals how Adams constructs melodic lines that create cohesion throughout the various sections of *Harmonium*.

Also in 2002, Pellegrino studied Adams’s methods for creating closure in *Phrygian Gates* and *The Chairman Dances*.\(^{37}\) Pellegrino examines how aspects of tonality, form, and rhetorical devices help present or obscure moments of closure in Adams’s music. Using the concept of “enigmas” or “puzzles,” the author looks at ways in which Adams sets up elements that imply the need for closure.\(^{38}\) Using musical

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34 Jemian, 1-2.

35 Ibid., 208.


38 Ibid., 154.
illustrations, the author demonstrates how Adams simultaneously creates the need for closure while striving to destabilize closural effect.\textsuperscript{39}

Sanchez-Behar conducted the first in-depth study of Adams’s use of polyphony and counterpoint in 2008.\textsuperscript{40} In addition to presenting the idea of four compositional periods for Adams’s career, the author uses a methodology based on Nicholas Slonimsky’s \textit{Thesaurus of Scales and Melodic Patterns} to analyze the one, two, and three-voice melodic patterns found in several of Adams’s fourth-period works. The author also discusses some of Adams’s typical compositional devices, such as displaced unisons and dovetailing. Additionally, Sanchez-Behar introduces the concept of “developing imitation” within Adams’s music.\textsuperscript{41} The author’s analysis establishes a connection between counterpoint, polyphony, and the formal structure of Adams’s music.

Traficante’s 2010 study focuses on dynamics, texture, and their relationship to form in Adams’s \textit{Grand Pianola Music}.\textsuperscript{42} Since this piece is minimalistic in style, the author chooses to look at dynamics and texture, as these are the elements that change most drastically throughout the composition.\textsuperscript{43} After discussing parameters for the interpretation of overall dynamic effects, Traficante graphs all of the dynamic and textural changes in \textit{Grand Pianola Music} over time. Traficante’s analysis of dynamics

\textsuperscript{39} Pellegrino, 169.

\textsuperscript{40} Sanchez-Behar, xii.

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 3.


\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 28.
and texture reveals formal elements of Adams’s music, and is designed to help conductors develop appropriate pacing when interpreting *Grand Pianola Music*.

**Sources that Discuss Adams’s Trumpet Writing**

While this performance guide for Adams’s most demanding trumpet parts is the first of its kind, there are earlier sources that consider Adams’s trumpet writing. Ball created the first such source in 1992, where he presented the challenges faced by conductors when encountering specific contemporary (1992) orchestral pieces by American composers.44 One of the works included in this study is Adams’s *Harmonielehre*. In addition to discussing the work’s history and inspiration, the author gives a description of each movement’s tempi, melodic figures, textures, colors, and orchestration. During his analysis, Ball mentions some of the challenges found in the second movement’s trumpet solo. These challenges include the fatiguing nature of the line and a need for finessed melodic playing.45 The author also discusses important instances in which Adams utilizes the brass section. Ball’s study can be used to assist in the analysis and interpretation of the trumpet part in *Harmonielehre*.

Burkhardt’s 1993 study examines the progress of Adams’s compositional style during his first decade on both the national and international stages.46 In this source, Burkhardt analyzes Adams’s *Shaker Loops, Harmonium, Nixon in China*, and *The Wound*

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Burkhardt then compares Adams’s compositional methods to those of minimalist composers such as Glass, Reich, and Riley. After analyzing the harmony, melody, and character found in specific Adams pieces, Burkhardt concludes that Adams has evolved to compose in a style that combines elements of experimental minimalism and established Western compositional processes. In regards to Adams’s trumpet parts, Burkhart discusses how Adams uses the trumpet in *Nixon in China* to text-paint during an aria in which the singer refers to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Burkhardt also mentions additional instances in *The Wound Dresser* in which Adams text-paints with the piccolo trumpet’s melodic line. Burkhardt’s work shows the crucial, dramatic role that the trumpet can play in Adams’s music.

In 1999, Dixon wrote an essay that examines the role of the trumpet in Adams’s works from the mid-to-late 1980s. Dixon looks at Adams’s use of the trumpet in *Harmonielehre, Nixon in China, Fearful Symmetries* (1988), *The Wound Dresser, The Chairman Dances, A Short Ride in a Fast Machine, and Tromba Lontana*. Dixon defines three primary roles of the trumpet in Adams’s music: fanfare, lyrical, and harmonic/rhythmic support. Within Adams’s music, the trumpet parts often navigate between or combine these roles. While narrow in scope, Dixon’s essay outlines the trumpet’s functions that can be used in the expanded analysis of all of Adams’s trumpet parts.

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47 Burkhardt, 183.

48 Ibid., 201.

Colvard’s 2004 interview of Adams provides insight into his compositional process and his use of the trumpet in *On the Transmigration of Souls*.\(^50\) In this source, Adams discusses how the trumpet solo from Ives’ *The Unanswered Question* is a “ghost in the background” of *On the Transmigration of Souls*.\(^51\) Using the analogy of a Renaissance-era parody mass, Adams describes how the “ghost” of Ives’s composition emerges and recedes. Adams points out that the trumpet melody in *On the Transmigration of Souls* is not a true quotation of *The Unanswered Question*, but is instead an allusion to Ives’s trumpet solo.

Machart’s essay, originally written in 2004, compares John Adams’s use of the trumpet to specific lines of Walt Whitman’s poem, “The Mystic Trumpeter.”\(^52\) Machart points out how Adams’s two orchestral fanfares, *Tromba lontana* and *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*, respectively embody the “subdued” and “whirling tempest” qualities presented in Whitman’s poem. The author writes: “In Adams, the trumpeter is, if not mystical in character, then at least elegiac.”\(^53\) The author then draws comparisons between Adams’s elegiac trumpet writing and both Charles Ives’s *The Unanswered Question* and Aaron Copland’s *Quiet City*.\(^54\) Machart lists Adams’s *Harmonielehre, The Wound Dresser, El Dorado, On the Transmigration of Souls*, and *My Father Knew*

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\(^{51}\) Ibid., 198.


\(^{53}\) Ibid., 388.

\(^{54}\) Ibid., 387.
Charles Ives as pieces in which the trumpet’s role is essential to creating musical drama.55

In 2006, Steve Hendrickson, Principal Trumpet of the National Symphony Orchestra, authored an article about his experience while serving on the committee for the orchestra’s second trumpet audition.56 In this source, Hendrickson responds to the question “What orchestral piece is your least favorite to play?” with the answer, “John Adams, Short Ride in a Fast Machine.” He elaborates, “After five minutes, both your brain and chops are wasted. Not good brass writing.”57 Hendrickson’s opinion, which is the result of Adams’s relentless and physically demanding trumpet writing in Short Ride in a Fast Machine, must be acknowledged. Short Ride in a Fast Machine may not have the most traditional or idiomatic trumpet writing, but orchestras around the world frequently program this Adams composition. Therefore, it is important to explore practice techniques, equipment choices, and practical solutions to the challenges found in Short Ride in a Fast Machine.

Morris’ 2010 blog post also presents some insight into Adams’s orchestral trumpet solos.58 A reflection on Morris’s time at the 2010 Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, this blog post discusses some of the pieces he performed while serving as principal trumpet in the festival orchestra. Morris lists the trumpet solo from

55 Machart, 388.
57 Ibid., 53.
58 Morris.
Adams’s *City Noir* as his favorite trumpet solo from Cabrillo’s 2010 season.

Additionally, Morris suggests that, with *Doctor Atomic Symphony* and *City Noir*, Adams has composed the two finest trumpet solos in orchestral trumpet literature. The difference between Hendrickson’s and Morris’s responses to Adams’s trumpet writing may demonstrate the development and maturation of the composer’s trumpet style. His earlier minimalist works, such as *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*, often include tiring, ostinati-like trumpet passages. Adams’s later compositions display an intimate understanding of the trumpet and its virtuosic capabilities.

In 2011, Dulin interviewed Michael Sachs, Principal Trumpet of the Cleveland Orchestra, to discuss the design and testing of the Bach Artisan model trumpet. Sachs mentions that he sometimes plays the trumpet solo from *Doctor Atomic Symphony* in order to test a trumpet’s lyrical qualities. Sachs also associates the trumpet solo from *Doctor Atomic Symphony* with other popular lyrical trumpet excerpts, such as Richard Strauss’s *Don Juan* or Respighi’s *Pini di Roma*.

Sachs’s 2012 orchestral excerpt book includes the trumpet solo from the end of *Doctor Atomic Symphony* (mm. 583-672) and the piccolo trumpet solo from *The Wound Dresser* (mm. 207-230). This book, however, does not include all of the excerpts from *Doctor Atomic Symphony* that were required for the Saint Louis Symphony’s 2011 principal trumpet audition. Each excerpt includes an annotation by Sachs. For *Doctor Atomic Symphony*, he points out that the trumpet’s solo was scored as a baritone aria in

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59 Dulin, 78.

the original opera setting. Additionally, Sachs discusses the aria’s dramatic content and plot context before offering some performance suggestions. For *The Wound Dresser*, Sachs discusses the scene depicted by Adams’s music and Whitman’s text.

Sources that Deal with the Study of Orchestral Trumpet Parts

This section focuses on sources that either examine a specific composer’s trumpet works (other than Adams’s compositions) or present information regarding the study and performance of orchestral trumpet parts. While a wide variety of orchestral trumpet excerpt books exist, this section will focus on those excerpt books that offer practice suggestions or discuss solutions to musical, performance, or logistical problems surrounding the trumpet parts. These sources can be used to develop performance recommendations and assist in the analysis of Adams’s trumpet parts.

Mortenson’s 1984 treatise on Stravinsky’s use of the trumpet and cornet provides a framework for understanding a composer’s approach to writing orchestral trumpet parts. Using examples from Stravinsky’s orchestral and chamber music oeuvre, Mortenson analyzes the composer’s treatment of the trumpet as a solo instrument. Additionally, Mortenson identifies two main tendencies in Stravinsky’s utilization of the trumpet section itself: the presence of independent lines within the different trumpet parts, and the use of the trumpet section as a homogenous unit. This source concludes with a discussion of Stravinsky’s conventional application of the trumpet, as well as his

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61 Mortenson, 1.

62 Ibid., 36.
pioneering uses of the instrument. Mortenson’s analysis of Stravinsky’s trumpet writing can be adapted to examine the solo, section, textural, conventional, and innovative uses of the trumpet in John Adams’s music.

Philip Smith, Principal Trumpet of the New York Philharmonic, created a compact disc recording in 1994 that contains practice and performance suggestions for a variety of standard orchestral excerpts. Smith also demonstrates his interpretations of these excerpts. The practice suggestions that accompany specific excerpts can be adapted to passages for Adams’s music that contain similar challenges.

In his 2004 collection of Mahler’s symphonic trumpet parts, Sachs includes an introduction that describes the importance of understanding how a trumpet excerpt fits into the larger orchestral texture. Sachs also emphasizes the need to strive for proper blend and balance depending on the trumpet’s function in a given passage. Important considerations involving offstage trumpet playing are also addressed. Throughout this source, Sachs includes annotations that offer performance suggestions and practice ideas. Sachs’ general ideas can be applied to the study of Adams’s trumpet music. Several of Adams’s compositions call for offstage trumpet solos, making Sachs’s ideas regarding offstage playing particularly applicable.

McGregor’s 2005 edition of orchestral trumpet studies contains annotations, performance suggestions, and practice recommendations for a variety of orchestral

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This source presents an array of exercises based on orchestral trumpet excerpts. By applying different articulations, patterns, pitches, meters, and styles to these exercises, McGregor seeks to avoid the entrenchment of bad habits that occurs when trumpet players carelessly or unvaryingly practice excerpts over and over again. His approach also allows the trumpet player to work out specific challenges found in orchestral excerpts. McGregor discusses some practical problem solving, offering advice regarding the redistribution of trumpet lines in a physically demanding piece such as Scriabin’s *Le Poème de l’Extase*. The diverse exercises in this source can be used to develop practice techniques for the challenging solos found in Adams’s music. Additionally, McGregor’s recommendations regarding part redistribution can be applied to Adams’s physically demanding trumpet parts, such as the first and second trumpet parts of *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*.

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66 Ibid., vol. 4, 60-71.
CHAPTER 3

METHOD

The purpose of this study is to create a performance guide for the challenging trumpet parts found within the music of John Coolidge Adams. This chapter presents the research methods and analytical procedures that are utilized in this study. The chapter then discusses the process used to develop practice and performance suggestions. Information about the presentation of note names and musical examples follows. Finally, this chapter ends with a discussion regarding the organization of Chapters 4-11.

Process for Selection of Works to be Studied

In the course of studying Adams’s trumpet writing, this document will look at all of John Adams’s orchestral and operatic works from his second, third, and fourth compositional periods (1977-2013). The choice to omit Adams’s first-period works is based on the fact that none specifically call for trumpet. While this study will highlight distinguishing elements of each of Adams’s trumpet works over the last 35 years, the focus will be on the compositions that offer the most challenges to orchestral trumpet players in the areas of range, endurance, technique, rhythm, intonation, and musicality.

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As of 2013, Adams utilizes the trumpet in 31 of his 35 original orchestral or operatic compositions written since 1979. The size of Adams’s oeuvre requires the researcher to determine which trumpet parts necessitate in-depth study and analysis. In order to decide which works to examine, this study uses criteria developed with the consideration of orchestral audition preparation and modern orchestral trumpet performance.

In order to be considered a work that is important to trumpet players, and therefore requiring deeper analysis and discussion within this document, it must meet at least one of the following criteria: 1) Repertoire Importance: the work has appeared on an orchestral trumpet audition list as of 2013; 2) Recognized Soloist: the trumpet player is given a named credit in a published review or within the liner notes for an audio or video recording of the work; 3) Unique Challenges/Innovations: the work presents unique technical demands or creates problems in the areas of interpretation and performance; and 4) Recognized Difficulty: previous studies or expert sources have pointed to the work’s challenging trumpet part(s).

The first Adams work that deserves further study is Harmonielehre, which meets the criteria of Unique Challenges/Innovations and Recognized Difficulty. In 1992, Ball observed the difficulties concerning control and fatigue in the second movement’s long, lyrical trumpet solo. Tromba lontana, or “Distant Trumpet,” is the next piece that is examined. This piece meets the condition of Recognized Soloist, as the liner notes of the 1987 San Francisco Symphony recording of this work list the two solo trumpeters, Glenn

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69 Ball, 75-76.
The next work, *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*, fulfills the criterion of Unique Challenges/Innovations. Within this piece, Adams asks the principal trumpet to play extended sections of high percussive articulations that push the envelope in terms of endurance and pacing. Challenges regarding blending and intonation within the trumpet section are also present.

*The Wound Dresser*, one of Adams’s third-period compositions, meets three of the criteria for further study: Recognized Soloist, Unique Challenges/Innovations, and Recognized Difficulty. The 1989 recording of *The Wound Dresser* lists the trumpet soloist, Chris Gekker, on the back of the CD cover, as well as within the liner notes. This piece presents a challenging piccolo trumpet passage that is excerpted in Sachs’s 2012 orchestral trumpet excerpt book.

Four of Adams’s fourth-period works fulfill the criteria for additional study. The first of these, *On the Transmigration of Souls*, meets the standard of Recognized Soloist, as the 2004 New York Philharmonic recording lists Phil Smith as the solo trumpeter within the liner notes. Another work, *My Father Knew Charles Ives*, also meets the conditions for Recognized Soloist. In the 2006 BBC Symphony Orchestra recording, the trumpet soloist, Bill Houghton, is listed on the back of the CD cover. Two works that

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appeared on principal trumpet audition lists in 2011, *Doctor Atomic Symphony* (Saint Louis Symphony) and *City Noir* (Los Angeles Philharmonic), meet all four of the criteria for further study. In addition to demonstrating Repertoire Importance, these two works have fulfilled criteria of Recognized Soloist, Unique Challenges/Innovations, and Recognized Difficulty.

**Process for Examining the History of Adams’s Trumpet Works**

This study gathers information from biographies, published interviews, liner notes, program notes, journal articles, dissertations, scholarly writings, audio recordings, video recordings, and musical scores for the purpose of understanding the elements that influence Adams’s trumpet writing. The research focuses on a piece’s commissioning procedure, debut performers, instrumentation, programmatic elements, compositional influences, alternate versions, and performance history. Historical information is then synthesized with the analysis of Adams’s trumpet parts in order to determine the common characteristics found in his trumpet music.

**Process for Analyzing Adams’s Trumpet Works**

This document focuses on the most challenging of Adams’s orchestral and operatic trumpet parts, but distinctive aspects from each of Adams’s trumpet parts are also addressed. Challenges in the areas of phrasing, articulation, rhythm, intonation, dynamics, range, endurance, ensemble, technique, phrasing, and innovative trumpet use are discussed when applicable. Elements of Adams’s compositional style are examined in order to show how specific trumpet parts illustrate his overall approach to trumpet
writing. Excerpts from Adams’s trumpet parts are illustrated with musical examples within the text. The study utilizes harmonic, phrase-structure, and score analysis, depending on the specific challenges found within each excerpt. A table with all of Adams’s trumpet parts, including the number of parts, specified trumpets (i.e., B♭ trumpet, piccolo trumpet, etc.), ranges, and required mutes appears in Appendix A.

**Process for Developing Practice and Performance Recommendations**

Following the analysis of specific trumpet excerpts, this document offers practice and performance recommendations. Suggested practice techniques draw from original ideas, as well as concepts and exercises found in common trumpet excerpt books, such as those published by Sachs and McGregor. Performance recommendations were developed using historical information, various forms of analysis, and audio recordings. Interpretations are informed by the author’s personal performance experience with some of these pieces, as well as conversations with his teacher, Craig Morris, a professional trumpet player who has played several of Adams’s compositions. Suggestions are given in the areas of dynamics, timbre, phrasing, tempo, intonation, ensemble balance, equipment selection, and logistical problem solving. When appropriate, the challenges in Adams’s trumpet parts are compared to the challenges found within standard orchestral excerpts. These standard orchestral excerpts are drawn from the material contained in widely available trumpet excerpt books or Smith’s orchestral excerpts audio recording.

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75 Sachs, *The Orchestral Trumpet*. McGregor.

76 Smith.
Process for Pitch Classification in Text and Notation in Musical Examples

Within the text of this study, specific notes are always referred to in concert pitch. They are classified in the following manner (Example 3.1):

**Example 3.1: Pitch Classification**

In musical examples, trumpet parts are always notated in their written pitches. For example, B♭ trumpet parts are shown transposed up a whole step from concert pitch.

**Organization of the Study**

Chapter 4 is an overview of the trumpet parts from Adams’s entire oeuvre. Following a discussion about the characteristics of his style of trumpet writing, the chapter chronologically presents background information and considers the salient features and challenges for each of Adams’s works that utilize the trumpet. Chapters 5-11 contain performance guides for the eight pieces that met the criteria for further study. These chapters are presented chronologically, starting with *Harmonielehre* (1985) in Chapter 5 and ending with *City Noir* (2009) in Chapter 11. Each of these chapters begins with a presentation of background information for each piece. An examination of the piece’s programmatic and/or structural elements, as well as its trumpet scoring, follows. The study then discusses the important solos, challenges, and performance issues found in the trumpet parts of each piece, offering suggestions for interpretation, preparation, and problem solving.
CHAPTER 4

AN OVERVIEW OF JOHN ADAMS’S TRUMPET WRITING

Before conducting an in-depth examination of John Adams’s most challenging and noteworthy trumpet parts, it is necessary to look at the characteristics of his trumpet writing. This chapter presents an overview of Adams’s orchestral and operatic works that utilize one or more trumpet parts. The purpose of this chapter is to provide background information, bring attention to trumpet issues found in specific works, and highlight the characteristics of Adams’s trumpet writing. This overview is organized by Adams’s compositional periods and proceeds chronologically through his oeuvre.  

Characteristics of Adams’s Trumpet Writing

Before looking at all of Adams’s compositions with trumpet parts, it is necessary to consider the characteristics of his trumpet writing. Adams’s pieces display several or all of these different features. The first characteristic of Adams’s trumpet music is the frequent utilization of the instrument’s upper register. Of Adams’s 31 different compositions with trumpet parts, all but four contain a trumpet pitch of concert C♯₆ or higher. A second feature of his trumpet music is how it challenges the player’s endurance. Adams’s music typically contains long, tiring stretches of rhythmic patterns (especially in his more minimalist pieces), demanding passages of fortissimo high register playing, and extended solos.

Adams’s music also regularly includes complex rhythmic patterns that require constant subdivision and precision. Adams’s trumpet parts, like the rest of his music,

77 Sanchez-Behar, 1.
often move seamlessly between duple, triplet, and quintuplet rhythms. The performer will likely encounter a variety of syncopated rhythms and asymmetrical meters in Adams’s compositions. A fourth characteristic of his trumpet music is the requirement of incredibly short articulations. The composer often writes staccatissimo articulations or specifies “extremely short” in his trumpet passages. The performer needs the ability to quickly and cleanly articulate melodic and accompanimental material in all registers. Adams has cited “the signature jabs and ‘bullets’ [Duke] Ellington’s brass” as having an influence on his own music.\footnote{Adams, \textit{Hallelujah Junction}, 53.} Therefore, these “bullets” – short sforzando notes, usually placed on offbeats or in syncopated figurations, appear regularly in Adams’s music.

A fifth characteristic of his trumpet parts is the presence of wide intervallic leaps in both articulated and lyrical solos. These are usually leaps of anywhere between a minor seventh and an augmented eleventh. These quick register shifts require great flexibility and a centered sound on each pitch. Sections that require excellent finger agility and valve technique are also typical of Adams’s trumpet parts. These passages often require the performers to execute virtuosic scalar patterns that test both the player’s agility and flexibility. The regular presence of swells or sudden dynamic shifts that require great control of one’s tone and intonation is a seventh characteristic of Adams’s trumpet music. The composer is very precise in his placement and pacing of dynamic changes.

Independence of parts is another feature of Adams’s trumpet music. Adams commonly gives interesting, important, or contrasting material to the section trumpets. The composer often treats the different trumpet parts as solo voices, and strong players
are needed on all parts. The final characteristic of Adams’s trumpet writing is the inclusion of passages that are challenging from a section or ensemble standpoint. This trait stems from his independent part-writing, as chord pyramiding, staggered entrances, and the passing of material back and forth between various trumpet parts requires a trumpet section filled with players who can play with solid rhythm, blended pitch, and matched styles.

Second-Period Works (1977-1987)

Adams’s first orchestral composition of his second period was *Common Tones in Simple Time*, which he completed in 1979. Premiered in 1980 by the San Francisco Conservatory of Music Orchestra under the composer’s direction, this piece is written in a minimalist style. Adams refers to this composition as a “pastoral with a pulse.”

*Common Tones in Simple Time* calls for two trumpets in C, with both parts requiring the use of straight mutes. The highest trumpet note in this work is a B. This is the first of four Adams pieces (as of 2013) that do not require a trumpet player to play a concert C or higher. Adams frequently displaces the two trumpets’ lines, creating overlapping and “pyramiding” effects. Independence of parts will become a salient feature of almost all of his music that uses more than one trumpet. There is also an experimental aspect to this work’s brass parts. In measure 71, Adams calls for the trumpets, as well as the rest of the brass section, to utilize a “diaphragmatic accent” rather than a tongued accent.

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Following a commission from the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, Adams composed his second orchestral piece, *Harmonium*, in 1980.\(^8\) Written for the first season of the San Francisco Symphony’s Louise M. Davies Hall, this piece was premiered in 1981 under the baton of Edo de Waart. Essentially a choral symphony, *Harmonium* utilizes a large orchestra and chorus. Four trumpet parts are required. Interestingly, this is the only Adams piece to call for trumpets in three different keys. The first trumpet part calls for trumpet in C, D, and B♭, while the second, third, and fourth trumpet parts are in both C and B♭. In many ways, *Harmonium* is the work that establishes many of the characteristics found in Adams’s trumpet writing. *Harmonium* contains sections that require the trumpets to play long, fatiguing ostinati-like lines, a characteristic that can be seen in many of his other compositions. This piece also displays another feature of Adams’s trumpet writing: the frequent use of the upper extremes of the trumpet’s register (Example 4.1).

Example 4.1 ends on multiple concert E\(^6\) pitches after 27 straight measures of playing, which poses a challenge to even the strongest trumpet players. Additionally, this excerpt comes after a particularly fatiguing section of near-constant playing that connects movements II and III. In the 13 measures that follow the Example 4.1, the first trumpet has several more fortissimo concert E\(^6\) pitches. Concurrent with the excerpt shown in Example 4.1, the second trumpet plays in rhythmic unison a third below the first trumpet, while the third and fourth trumpets play their own eighth-note ostinati rhythms. Therefore, there are no obvious opportunities to have the other three trumpets cover for first trumpet player. A possible solution to the extreme endurance challenges of this passage is to utilize an assistant. The first trumpet and the assistant can trade phrases or

statements throughout this section. Using a piccolo trumpet may also improve the efficiency of execution in this passage. The performer must decide if the tone color and projection differences between piccolo trumpet and D trumpet are acceptable.

**Example 4.1: Adams, *Harmonium*, movement III, mm. 138-171. First Trumpet.**

Example 4.1 highlights another characteristic of John Adams’s trumpet writing: the presence of wide intervallic leaps. This excerpt begins with a slurred minor seventh interval, with 11 different slurred major ninth intervals appearing in the following measures. *Harmonium* is the first of many Adams pieces that profoundly test the physical and technical capabilities of the orchestral trumpet player.

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The ending of the third movement of *Harmonium* calls for all four trumpets to switch to B♭ trumpet. At this point in the piece, the bombastic ostinati found earlier in the movement have given way to a softer, lyrical texture. The section that begins in measure 355 of Movement III requires sensitive, soft playing from trumpets 2-4 as they support a soft, lyrical first trumpet solo (Example 4.2).

**Example 4.2: Adams, *Harmonium*, movement III, mm. 355-369.**

Following Example 4.2, the lowest note of the B♭ trumpet parts, a concert F♯₃, is found in both the first and second trumpet parts in measure 378 and again in the first part.
in mm. 382-383. These B♭ trumpet parts can therefore be played on C trumpet. It would appear that Adams’s choice of B♭ trumpet is rooted in a desire for a specific trumpet tone color. If the performer chooses to play this section on C trumpet, it is important to strive for a warm, dark B♭ trumpet timbre when performing this section. At the end of the first trumpet’s solo concert F♯₃, Adams has the first trumpet rest. He then gives the second trumpet the top voice in the trumpet chords that follow (Example 4.3).

**Example 4.3: Adams, *Harmonium*, movement III, mm. 373-384.**

Adams’s trumpet writing in *Harmonium* requires all members of the trumpet section to display both sheer strength and finessed, lyrical playing. Adams often treats the four trumpets independently, giving each player a separate melodic or ostinatic line. There are also several occasions where one of the section trumpets plays the top voice of chords while the first trumpet rests. *Harmonium* therefore displays another feature of Adams’s trumpet writing: independence of parts, with important, interesting, and/or challenging material in both the principal and section parts of his compositions.

*Grand Pianola Music* is Adams’s next work that includes trumpet parts. Composed in 1982, this work was the result of a commission by both the General
Atlantic Corporation and David Rumsey. Written for two solo pianos, three amplified female voices, winds, brass, and percussion, this work does not utilize stringed instruments. Therefore, orchestras as well as wind ensembles can perform this piece. Piano soloists Robin Sutherland and Julie Steinberg, accompanied by the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, gave the premiere performance of Grand Pianola Music in 1982. Adams was the conductor.

While the score’s instrumentation lists two trumpets in B♭, this piece is actually written for two trumpets in B♭ and C. For the majority of the first movement, the two trumpets are written in B♭. However, in measure 694, the two trumpet parts switch to C trumpet. From mm. 694-703, the first trumpet part includes multiple C♯ pitches. It is possible that Adams scored this passage for C trumpet in order to simplify the execution of these C♯ notes. When the second movement arrives, the two trumpet parts revert back to B♭ trumpet. Grand Pianola Music requires both straight mute, and, for the first time in Adams’s oeuvre, Harmon mute. If the players so choose, this piece can be played entirely on B♭ trumpet or entirely on C trumpet.

The trumpet parts of Grand Pianola Music may not contain as many challenging and physically demanding moments as Harmonium, but there are still some sections that demonstrate Adams’s characteristic style of trumpet writing. The section beginning at measure 389 of Part I (Movement I) shows Adams’s characteristic fatiguing, ostinatic-

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84 Traficante, 6.


86 Adams, Grand Pianola Music.
like sections and his exploitation of the upper extreme of the trumpet’s register. This section begins with the two trumpets playing fortissimo chords with the rest of the brass. The first trumpet then ascends to a concert B♭ in measure 397, beginning a string of near-constant concert B♭ quarter notes that lasts for nine measures. Another passage that requires a great deal of control in the extreme upper register can be found in measure 694 of Part I. This is the previously mentioned section where the trumpet parts switch to C trumpet. Adams writes several measures of sustained fff C♯ and B♭ pitches in the first trumpet part. The section ends with a C♯ held for 12 beats (tempo of quarter note = 54), all while the dynamic tapers from fff down to piano.

Adams’s next orchestral work, Harmonielehre, was composed in 1985. Harmonielehre was written for four trumpets in C, and calls for straight mutes. There are several challenges in the areas of intonation, endurance, lyrical playing, rhythmic precision, and section playing. These challenges are discussed in-depth in Chapter 5.

Also written in 1985, Adams’s The Chairman Dances was commissioned by the National Endowment of the Arts. The premiere performance took place in 1986 with Lukas Foss conducting the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. According to Adams, this work was “neither an ‘excerpt’ nor a ‘fantasy on themes from’” his later opera, Nixon in China. Adams considers The Chairman Dances, subtitled “Foxtrot for Orchestra,” to have been a “warmup” for the opera. The score calls for two trumpets in B♭ and requires straight mutes. Typical of Adams’s style, it contains several rhythmic ostinati in the trumpet parts as well as some linear independence. The soaring melodic material found

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in mm. 305-318 requires a strong first trumpet player. Otherwise, *The Chairman Dances* has one of the more straightforward trumpet parts of Adams’s oeuvre. This is the second of four compositions by Adams that do not include a concert C⁶ pitch or higher in the trumpet parts.

Adams’s orchestral fanfare, *Tromba lontana*, was completed in 1985. It employs two antiphonal trumpets in C. Challenges in the areas of intonation, lyrical playing, and articulation are discussed in Chapter 6.

*Short Ride in a Fast Machine*, written in 1986, calls for four trumpets in C. Another orchestral fanfare, it is notorious for its challenges in regards to endurance, range, rhythmic precision, intonation, and section playing. An in-depth look at these challenges is found in Chapter 6.

The last work of Adams’s second period is the opera *Nixon in China*. Completed in 1987 after two years of work, *Nixon in China* fulfilled a commission from the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Houston Grand Opera, and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The Houston Grand Opera, under the direction of John DeMain, premiered *Nixon in China* in 1987. This work is quite possibly Adams’s best-known composition. Written for three trumpets in C, Adams calls for straight mutes, Harmon mutes, and, for the first and only time in his oeuvre, plunger mutes. In 1998,

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Adams arranged three suites from *Nixon in China* for voices and orchestra. These suites are known as *The Nixon Tapes*.

*Nixon in China*, like many of Adams’s works, displays independence of the trumpet parts. This can be seen from the beginning of the opera, where the three trumpets hand off statements of muted scalar material before the second trumpet switches to Harmon mute and plays a contrasting staccato line. The trumpet parts from Act I, Scene 3 demonstrate two additional characteristics of Adams’s trumpet writing: the presence of melodic lines that utilize the upper register of the trumpet and present challenges in the areas of endurance or technical flexibility, as well as large intervallic leaps (Example 4.4).

**Example 4.4: Adams, Nixon in China, Act I, Scene 3, mm. 724-732.**

The major ninth intervals in the three trumpet parts between mm. 727 and 728 of Example 4.4 is a sample of the large intervals (slurred or articulated) that make appearances in many of Adams’s later compositions. While trumpet methods frequently

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93 Musical examples from *Nixon in China: Nixon in China* by John Adams. © Copyright 1987 Alice Goodman and Hendon Music, Inc., A Boosey & Hawkes company. Copyright for all countries. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission.
address seventh and octave intervals, intervals beyond an octave are sometimes ignored or receive cursory treatment. If one is to perform John Adams’s music, it is imperative that the performer has a solid mastery of intervals up to an octave and beyond.

_Nixon in China_ presents another challenge for the performer in the area of lyrical playing. This can be seen in Act II, Scene 1, which contains Pat Nixon’s soprano aria, “This is Prophetic.” After Nixon references the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Adams has a Harmon-muted trumpet accompany the soprano with a long, lyrical line (Example 4.5).

**Example 4.5: Adams, *Nixon in China*, Act II, Scene 1, mm. 547-569.**
The excerpt in Example 4.5 is an instance in which Adams uses text painting, wherein he suggests the bugler’s Taps that are performed at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.\textsuperscript{94} The lyrical trumpet line must be performed with great care and finesse. Intervals should be smooth and connected so as to complement and blend with the long notes of the soprano line. The trumpet player must also possess great control in order to delicately pace the crescendos and decrescendos. This is especially true near the end of the solo, where fatigue may factor in as the solo rises to a sustained $B_\flat^5$. Additionally, issues of intonation, exacerbated by the use of Harmon mute, must be addressed. The solo in Example 4.5 therefore demonstrates another feature of Adams’s trumpet writing: the presence of long, lyrical trumpet lines that provide challenges in the areas of musicality, delicate lyrical playing, intonation, and endurance.


*Fearful Symmetries* is the first of Adams’s third-period works.\textsuperscript{95} The Orchestra of St. Luke’s commissioned this work, which Adams completed in 1988. The composer directed the Orchestra of St. Luke’s for the premiere performance later that year.\textsuperscript{96} This work calls for three trumpets in C, utilizing both straight mutes and Harmon mutes.

Typical of Adams’s trumpet music, there are several instances of independence of parts within this piece. In measure 47, the third trumpet plays a muted, staccato triplet figure with the trombones, while the first and second trumpets play muted, marcato

\textsuperscript{94} Burkhardt, 183.


quarter-note “bullets” with the horns. Instances of trumpet pyramiding also occur later in the piece. Also characteristic of Adams’s music, there are sections that require sustained playing in the upper register. This can be seen in mm. 223-231, where, following a syncopated, ascending chromatic scale beginning on D\textsuperscript{5}, the first trumpet plays four measures of sustained D\textsuperscript{6}. This work also poses some minor challenges in the area of soft lyrical playing and finger dexterity.

The Wound Dresser, also completed in 1988, was written for baritone voice and chamber orchestra.\textsuperscript{97} This work utilizes one trumpet in C, doubling on piccolo trumpet in C. This is Adams’s first composition to call for the use of piccolo trumpet, a practice that becomes more common during his fourth compositional period. The Wound Dresser presents challenges in the areas of lyrical playing, extremes of range, rhythmic precision, piccolo trumpet playing, and endurance. These challenges are discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

Adams’s next opera, The Death of Klinghoffer, was completed and premiered in 1991.\textsuperscript{98} The premiere was conducted by Kent Nagano at Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels. The Brooklyn Academy of Music, la Monnaie/de Munt, Opera de Lyon, Glyndebourne Productions, Los Angeles Festival, and the San Francisco Opera jointly commissioned this opera.

The Death of Klinghoffer uses smaller orchestral forces than Nixon in China, and calls for two trumpets in C. Straight mutes are required. The trumpet parts of Adams’s second opera are not as dense or active as Nixon in China, yet there are still some notable

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moments that provide challenges. An excerpt from Act I, Prologue, Scene 1, shows how Adams’s music sometimes presents finger dexterity hurdles for the performers (Example 4.6).

Example 4.6: Adams, *The Death of Klinghoffer*, Act I, Prologue, Scene 1: mm. 244-247.

This passage shows another characteristic of Adams’s trumpet parts: the presence of fast, scalar lines that require nimble fingers and good flexibility. Slow practice is essential to securing proper execution and clarity in both of the trumpet parts.

In measure 227 of Act I, Scene 2, Adams writes “vibrato” in the trumpet and trombone parts. To date, this marks the first and only time in his oeuvre where vibrato is specified for trumpets. Another first for Adams is seen in measure 66 of Act 2, Scene 2a. At this point, following Marilyn Klinghoffer’s contralto aria, the first trumpet rises to E[^6](Example 4.7). Adams had previously written a concert E[^6] for D trumpet in *Harmonium* and for C piccolo trumpet in *The Wound Dresser*. The E[^6] in *Death of Klinghoffer*, however, is the first instance in which Adams scores E[^6] for a standard C trumpet. This opera is one of Adams’s two compositions that include an E[^6] for C trumpet.

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Musical examples from *The Death of Klinghoffer: The Death of Klinghoffer* by John Adams. © Copyright 1991 Hendon Music, Inc., A Boosey & Hawkes company. Copyright for all countries. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission.
Example 4.7: Adams, *The Death of Klinghoffer*, Act II, Scene 2a, mm. 66-70. First Trumpet.

*El Dorado*, completed in 1991, is the final orchestral composition of Adams’s third compositional period.\(^{100}\) Herbert Blomstedt and the San Francisco Symphony commissioned this work. Adams conducted the San Francisco Symphony in the premiere performance later that year.\(^{101}\) *El Dorado* is unique among Adams’s output in that it is his only work that requires flugelhorn. Adams’s score calls for three trumpets in C, with the first and second trumpets doubling on flugelhorn in B♭. Trumpet straight mutes are required.

Typically used in a jazz, brass band, or wind ensemble setting, the flugelhorn is rarely used in an orchestral setting. Besides *El Dorado*, other orchestral pieces that utilize the flugelhorn are Ralph Vaughn Williams’ *Symphony No. 9* (1957), Igor Stravinsky’s *Threni* (1958), and Michael Tippett’s *Symphony No. 3* (1972). *El Dorado*, unlike these other pieces, calls for two flugelhorns rather than one.

The first entrance in the trumpet parts of *El Dorado* is a flugelhorn entrance. This entrance takes place in measure 81 of Part I (Movement I). The flugelhorn mezzo-forte solo line functions as the top voice of a four-part homophonic passage with the horns. After this section, the principal switches from flugelhorn to trumpet for the rest of the


\(^{101}\) Ibid.
movement. In Part II (Movement II), Adams has the first trumpet switch to flugelhorn in measure 35 (he does however, make a note stating that this section can be played on the trumpet if desired.)\(^{102}\) The solo flugelhorn line in this movement appears to be a quotation of an earlier Adams composition, *Tromba lontana* (discussed in Chapter 6).\(^{103}\) While the meter differs, the line in *El Dorado* keeps the same pitches (concert C\(^5\) and concert D\(^5\)) and rhythmic shape as mm. 4-7 from *Tromba lontana*. The *Tromba lontana* motive, as well at the flugelhorn motive from *El Dorado*, can be seen in Examples 4.8 and 4.9, respectively.

**Example 4.8: Adams, *Tromba lontana*, mm. 4-7.**\(^{104}\)

![Example 4.8](image)

**Example 4.9: Adams, *El Dorado*, movement III, mm. 35-38.**\(^{105}\)

![Example 4.9](image)

After this initial allusion to *Tromba lontana*, the flugelhorn solo strikes out on a similar, yet altered melodic path, eventually rising up to the highest flugelhorn note in the piece, a concert A\(_1\)\(^5\) in measure 49. Later, in measure 116 of Part II, Adams has both the first and

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\(^{102}\) Adams, *El Dorado*, 81.

\(^{103}\) Machart, 388.

\(^{104}\) Musical examples from *Tromba lontana: Tromba lontana* by John Adams. © Copyright 1986 Hendon Music, Inc., A Boosey & Hawkes company. Copyright for all countries. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission.

\(^{105}\) Musical examples from *El Dorado: El Dorado* by John Adams. © Copyright 1991 Hendon Music, Inc., A Boosey & Hawkes company. Copyright for all countries. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission.
second players play rising flugelhorn lines in thirds. This is the final flugelhorn passage of the piece.

In *El Dorado*, Adams once again writes trumpet passages that require fast valve work, as well as extremely short, articulate playing in all three trumpet parts. One such passage is found from mm. 115-124 in Part I. This piece also contains several long, high lines that challenge the player’s endurance, such as passage from mm. 254-277 of Part I. In this section, the first and second trumpets play a long, sustained scalar line that rises up to a D⁶ in the first trumpet. Immediately after this note, the first trumpet rests and the second trumpet takes over the line, ascending to C⁶ two measures later. After a few measures of rest, another line begins in which the first trumpet ascends to C♯⁶. Besides the passing of the line from first to second trumpet, this section contains additional independence in the third trumpet part. As the first and second trumpets play their rising, connected line, the third trumpet plays staccato eighth notes and triplets.

One last noteworthy aspect of *El Dorado* is found in measure 232 of Part II. Here, Adams suggests the optional use of piccolo trumpet.¹⁰⁶ From mm. 233-240 in the first trumpet part, Adams writes multiple slurred A⁵ - B⁵ and B⁵ - C⁶ figures. Perhaps understanding that this can be fatiguing, Adams gives the first trumpet the option to use piccolo trumpet to aid in the execution of this passage.

**Fourth-Period Works (1992-Present)**

*Chamber Symphony* is the first of Adams’s fourth-period compositions.¹⁰⁷ Composed in 1992 after a commission from the Gerbode Foundation of San Francisco for

the San Francisco Contemporary Chamber Players, it was premiered in early 1993 by the Schoenberg Ensemble in The Hague, Holland, with Adams conducting. The San Francisco Contemporary Chamber Players gave the American premiere of *Chamber Symphony* a few months later.108

*Chamber Symphony* calls for one trumpet in C, and, for the first time in his oeuvre, Adams specifies the use of both straight and fiber mutes. Like many of Adams’s compositions, this work challenges the performer in the areas of endurance, range, finger dexterity, lyrical finesse, dynamic control, and rhythmic precision. Beginning in measure 128 of Movement I, “Mongrel Airs,” Adams writes a long, sustained trumpet line that begins on G₃. Rising gradually by stepwise motion, the trumpet makes a crescendo up to a forte B♭₅ multiple times over the ensuing 16 measures of the passage. The first movement also includes two sections in which the trumpet uses a straight mute as it plays forte high register lines in octaves with the horn.

In Movement II, “Aria with Walking Bass,” mm. 9-18, the trumpet plays an unmuted, mezzo-piano lyrical line that accompanies a trombone solo. In mm. 19-32, Adams has the trumpet join the horn and trombone in a pianissimo lyrical figure accompanying an oboe solo. Once again, finesse and control are needed in order to play these lyrical lines smoothly and quietly. Later in the movement, the player is required to play in a completely different style. Starting in measure 117, where Adams marks the trumpet and horn notes as “very short,” the two instruments play sforzando “bullets.” The proper placement of these short notes requires subdivision, as they appear in a

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variety of rhythmic configurations. This passage also requires the trumpet player to play short, repeated notes in the upper register, on notes such as B⁵ and C♯⁶. After the “bullet” notes, Adams writes a winding line of slurred thirty-second notes in the trumpet from mm. 131-134. Movement II is marked as quarter note = 62. The octatonic nature of the trumpet line, as well as the unexpected appearance of intervallic leaps of a minor third, a diminished fourth, and a tritone, will demand many slow repetitions in order to properly prepare this passage.

Movement III, “Roadrunner,” begins with several measures of fast swells (Example 4.10).

**Example 4.10: Adams, Chamber Symphony, movement III, mm. 1-4.**

![Example music notation](image)

These sudden crescendo-decrescendos on single notes appear in many of Adams’s works, and are characteristic of his trumpet writing. These notes require quick, overt dynamic changes, as well as control of intonation. Later in Movement III, from mm. 88-103, Adams writes a solo trumpet line that repeatedly rises up to B♭⁵ and B⁵. Throughout this movement, Adams gives the trumpet fast, loud material in the high register.

The Minnesota Orchestra, the London Symphony Orchestra, and the New York City Ballet co-commissioned Violin Concerto, Adams’s next fourth-period work. Completed in 1993, the Minnesota Orchestra premiered this work in 1994 with Jorja

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109 Musical examples from *Chamber Symphony: Chamber Symphony* by John Adams. © Copyright Hendon Music, Inc., A Boosey & Hawkes company. Copyright for all countries. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission.

Fleezan is on violin and Edo De Waart at the podium. Written for small orchestral forces, this work calls for one trumpet in C. Adams specifies a metal straight mute in Movement III, “Toccare.” In the muted passages in Movement I, he simply writes “con sord.” Therefore, it can be inferred that Adams expects the player to use a soft (cardboard, fiber, plastic, or plastic) straight mute in the opening movement.

While the trumpet part for Adams’s Violin Concerto is not as dense or active as in some of his other works (the trumpet is tacet in Movement II), it still contains some noteworthy passages and challenges. The first movement includes some soft, smooth lines that frequently ascend into the high register. Additionally, in mm. 151-167, the trumpet plays a muted, staccato line of nearly constant eighth notes that includes many wide intevallic leaps, such as perfect elevenths (measure 153) and augmented elevenths (measure 162).

Characteristic of Adams’s music, Violin Concerto makes extensive use of the upper register of the trumpet. In Movement III, Adams writes the passage shown in Example 4.11. This composition is the second Adams piece to contain an E♭⁶ for C trumpet. Adams also writes a figure in mm. 189-192 that rises up to a D♯⁶. While these high notes are attainable for professional trumpet players, the use of D, E♭, or piccolo trumpet is possible and may provide more security and ease of execution.

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Example 4.11: Adams, Violin Concerto, movement III, mm. 112-116.\textsuperscript{112}

Violin Concerto also contains a section that presents rhythmic and ensemble challenges. Starting in measure 63 of Movement III, Adams writes a shifted quarter-note quintuplet figure for the trumpet (Example 4.12):


Played with the oboe, bassoon, and later, the English horn, this quintuplet figure continues until measure 76. This passage is made even more difficult because the quintuple rhythm is juxtaposed with duple offbeat and syncopated rhythms in the flutes and clarinets. If the player strives to line up the first quintuplet note with beat three of every measure, this passage can find an even groove.

Adams’s next piece with trumpet parts is his 1995 composition, \textit{Lollapalooza}.\textsuperscript{113}

The premiere performance took place in 1995 in Birmingham, England, with Simon

\textsuperscript{112} Musical examples from \textit{Violin Concerto: Violin Concerto} by John Adams. © Copyright Hendon Music, Inc., A Boosey & Hawkes company. Copyright for all countries. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission.

\textsuperscript{113} John Adams, \textit{Lollapalooza} (New York: Boosey and Hawkes, 1995.)
Rattle leading the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.\textsuperscript{114} \textit{Lollapalooza} calls for three trumpets in C, with straight mutes specified at certain points in the piece.

\textit{Lollapalooza}, only six minutes in length, is among Adams’s shorter orchestral works. Despite the piece’s brevity, its trumpet parts present challenges in the areas of high register playing, ensemble playing, rhythmic precision, and finger dexterity. There are also several moments where Adams treats the trumpet parts independently (Example 4.13).

\textbf{Example 4.13: Adams, \textit{Lollapalooza}, mm. 81-89.}\textsuperscript{115}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{example4.13.png}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{114} Adams, \textit{Lollapalooza}.

\textsuperscript{115} Musical examples from \textit{Lollapalooza: Lollapalooza} by John Adams. © Copyright 1995 Hendon Music, Inc., A Boosey & Hawkes company. Copyright for all countries. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission.
The first trumpet solo in this excerpt requires fast, non-staccato articulations in the upper register, often rising up to D♭. This passage shares some of the same challenges as the first trumpet solo from mm. 231-249 of the last movement of Béla Bartók’s Concerto for Orchestra. Just as with the Bartók passage, the first player may choose to play this passage on an E♭ trumpet, as it would simplify execution and make it easier to avoid heaviness in the sixteenth notes.\footnote{Sachs, \textit{The Orchestral Trumpet}, 18.}

Example 4.13 also provides an instance of independence of parts, in which the second and third trumpets play a rhythmic figure that differs from the first trumpet’s line. Further linear independence is on display during mm. 197-210. In this passage, the three trumpets have staggered entrances, playing overlapping D♭-major scales and passing material back and forth. This section presents another example of Adams’s tendency to write trumpet parts that require great finger dexterity.

In 1996, Adams completed \textit{Scratchband}.\footnote{John Adams, \textit{Scratchband}, revised 1997 (New York: Boosey and Hawkes, 1997).} Premiered that same year with Adams conducting the Ensemble Modern at Penn State University in University Park, PA, \textit{Scratchband} is scored for amplified ensemble. Commissioned by the Freeman Fund for Contemporary Music, Adams later revised this work in 1997. The 1997 revision is the version that was published and is most often performed. While \textit{Scratchband} is not an orchestral work, the London Sinfonietta gave a performance of this work in 2006.\footnote{Jason S. Ladd, “An Annotated Bibliography of Contemporary Works Programmable by Wind Band and Orchestra” (PhD diss., Florida State University, 2009), 45.} Typically, wind ensembles or contemporary music ensembles play this piece.

\textit{Scratchband} calls for one trumpet in C, with straight mute specified at certain
points. Like many of Adams’s trumpet pieces, it utilizes nearly the whole range of the trumpet, spanning from A♭ \(_3\) up to C♯ \(_6\). This piece also features several octatonic, whole tone, and chromatic scalar lines that require excellent valve technique. In mm. 269-290, the trumpet alternates between an articulate sixteenth-note line that features several octave leaps and syncopated, offbeat sforzando “bullets.” In another passage, starting in measure 369, the trumpet player must play articulate triplet figures. Subdivision is critical in order to accurately play the rhythms of this disjunct line. A final noteworthy aspect of *Scratchband* exists in measure 501, where Adams writes, “pure, flugelhorn-like tone” over a sustained C \(_5\).\(^{119}\) From this point until the end of the piece, the trumpet continues in this manner, playing soft, sustained notes that eventually overlap with horn and trombone entrances. While the player may consider switching to flugelhorn for the closing section of *Scratchband*, there is only measure of 3/4 in which to do so. With a tempo marking of quarter note = 128, this switch may prove to be impossible. If the player continues on C trumpet, it is important the he or she has a warm, flugelhorn-like sound throughout this passage.

*Slonimsky’s Earbox* was also composed and premiered in 1996.\(^{120}\) Written for a commission from the Hallé Concerts Society and the Oregon Symphony Orchestra, the premiere performance of this work was given by Kent Nagano and the Hallé Orchestra in Manchester, England. Written for four trumpets in C, *Slonimsky’s Earbox* requires the use of straight mutes. This piece begins with a section that features short, sforzando “bullets” for all four trumpets. Once again, Adams exploits the upper register of the trumpet, writing multiple C\(^6\), C♯\(^6\), and D♭\(^6\) pitches in the first trumpet part. In mm. 288-


305, Adams staggers the trumpet entrances, creating a pyramid effect from the fourth trumpet up to the first trumpet. Near the end of the piece, from mm. 530-531, Adams gives the four trumpets a slurred, rising figure that requires great dexterity and finger technique.

Following a commission by the Cleveland Orchestra, Adams composed *Century Rolls* for solo piano and orchestra in 1997. Century Rolls was premiered that year, with Emanuel Ax and the Cleveland Orchestra under the direction of Christoph von Dohnányi. In this work, Adams scores for three trumpets in C, utilizing straight mutes and cardboard mutes. This is the first piece in which he specifically calls for cardboard mutes.

*Century Rolls* does not contain as much melodic material for the trumpets as most other Adams works. There are still many challenging aspects to this piece. Movement I contains many sforzandos and short “bullet” notes in the trumpets. C⁶ appears frequently in the first trumpet part. As in Adams’s Violin Concerto, the trumpets are tacet for Movement II, “Manny’s Gym.” In Movement III, “Hail Bop,” the short offbeat and syncopated “bullets” return in the trumpets, this time with multiple C♯⁶ and D⁶ pitches in the first trumpet part. There are also several lines in the trumpets that require very short, articulate playing. One such section is seen in measure 27, where the trumpets play mezzo-piano offbeat quarter notes. Adams marks mm. 27-46 “very short (background)” and “ossia: con sordino.” This is the only instance in Adams’s music where he gives the trumpets the option to use or not use mutes. The choice of using

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122 “Ossia: con sordino” translates to “Alternatively: with mute.”
mutes is up to the conductor and will likely depend on the balance with the solo piano, which is “lightly amplified.”

*Naive and Sentimental Music* was composed in 1999 after a commission from the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Ensemble Modern Orchestra, the Vancouver Symphony, and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.\(^{123}\) The premiere performance took place that same year with Esa-Pekka Salonen conducting the Los Angeles Philharmonic. To date, *Naive and Sentimental Music* is Adams’s longest purely orchestral composition, clocking in at 48 minutes long.\(^{124}\)

Written for four trumpets in C, this work calls for both straight mutes and cardboard mutes. There are several instances in which the first trumpet plays lines that soar into the upper register. *Naive and Sentimental Music* is notable in that it also makes similar demands of the second trumpet. The passage in measure 96 of Movement I, also titled “Naive and Sentimental Music,” demonstrates Adams’s high register writing for both the first and second players (Example 4.14).

**Example 4.14: Adams, *Naive and Sentimental Music*, movement I, mm. 96-101.**\(^{125}\)


\(^{124}\) Ibid.

\(^{125}\) Musical examples from *Naive and Sentimental Music: Naive and Sentimental Music* by John Adams. © Copyright by Hendon Music, Inc., A Boosey & Hawkes company. Copyright for all countries. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission.
This excerpt in Example 4.14 presents challenges to both first and second trumpets in regards to range, intonation, and blending. The unison D⁶ in measure 99 marks the first and as of 2013, the only time Adams requires a D⁶ in a second trumpet part. Near the end of the piece, Adams places additional high register demands on the second trumpet player, having the player trade B⁵ and A⁵ pitches with the first trumpet in mm. 378-394 of Movement III, “Chain to the Rhythm.”

This composition also requires great rhythmic precision from the whole trumpet section. From mm. 127-183 of Movement I, Adams has all four trumpets play offbeat, syncopated rhythms, as well as eighth-note triplets and quarter-note triplets. Subdivision, as well as an understanding of how the parts relate rhythmically, is important. Similar figures and rhythmic challenges are also found in Movement III.

*Naive and Sentimental Music* also has sections with long, lyrical lines in the trumpets. In Movement II, “Mother of the Man,” Adams writes soft, sustained ascending lines in the first, second, and third trumpet parts. Starting with the first trumpet’s entrance in measure 138 and continuing through measure 175, this section requires the players to play with great control in the upper register in order to pace crescendos and decrescendos appropriately and pass lines from player to player.

Adams’s next composition to use trumpet is *Guide to Strange Places.¹²⁶* Completed and premiered in 2001, it was commissioned by Matinee op de vrije zaterdag, the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. The Netherlands

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\textit{Guide to Strange Places} calls for three trumpets in C. The trumpet parts require straight mutes and, for the first time since \textit{Fearful Symmetries} (1988), Harmon mutes. Typical of Adams’s trumpet music, this piece makes extensive use of the upper register (D\textsuperscript{6} in the first trumpet part, B\textsubscript{♭}\textsuperscript{5} in the second and third trumpet parts), contains syncopated and complex rhythmic passages, requires very short, articulate playing, and displays several instances of independence within the three trumpet parts. Adams’s lyrical trumpet writing is also highlighted in mm. 385-399. In this section, Adams writes three brass chorale statements in which the trumpets and trombones play flowing quarter-note and quarter-note triplet rhythms.

Adams’s next orchestral composition is the Pulitzer Prize winning work, \textit{On The Transmigration of Souls}.\footnote{128}{John Adams, \textit{On the Transmigration of Souls} (New York: Boosey and Hawkes, 2002).} Completed in 2002, it calls for four trumpets in C and utilizes straight mutes. This work includes a long, lyrical offstage trumpet solo that presents challenges in the areas of musicality, intonation, large intervallic leaps, endurance, and finessed playing in the high register. The challenges of this work are discussed further in Chapter 8.

Adams composed \textit{My Father Knew Charles Ives} in 2003. It uses four trumpets in C, with the fourth trumpet doubling on B\textsubscript{♭} trumpet.\footnote{129}{John Adams, \textit{My Father Knew Charles Ives}, third edition (New York, NY: Boosey and Hawkes: 2007).} This piece uses both straight mutes and Harmon mutes. In this work, he writes two long, lyrical trumpet solos that pose...
challenges similar to those found in the solo from *On the Transmigration of Souls*. These solos, as well as the other important trumpet moments found throughout *My Father Knew Charles Ives*, are discussed in Chapter 9.

Also written in 2003, *The Dharma at Big Sur* is Adams’s next concerto-like composition.\textsuperscript{130} Composed for solo electric violin and orchestra, it was the result of a commission from the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Tracy Silverman played electric violin and Esa-Pekka Salonen conducted the Los Angeles Philharmonic for the 2003 world premiere.\textsuperscript{131}

*The Dharma at Big Sur* is scored for three trumpets in C, with the first trumpet doubling on D trumpet. Some prints of the instrumentation page of the score erroneously list four trumpets in C, but there are in fact only three trumpet parts. Straight mutes are required, and, in measure 58 of Movement I, “A New Day,” Adams writes: “Trumpets: use mutes which produce the softest, least brassy sound.” Soft straight mutes, such as those made out of fiber, cardboard, plastic, or wood, are possible choices. Adjustable cup mutes may also be good options. If the first trumpet uses D trumpet, the player must consider whether his or her mute choice will properly fit into the bell of a D trumpet.

Throughout this piece, Adams writes sustained, soft notes in the high register. His utilization of D trumpet, an instrument he had not called for since *Harmonium* (1980), improves the accuracy and execution of the muted line that begins in measure 370 of Movement II, “Sri Moonshine.” This passage rises up to concert D\textsuperscript{♯} (Example 4.15).

\textsuperscript{130} John Adams, *The Dharma at Big Sur* (New York: Boosey and Hawkes, 2009).

Example 4.15: Adams, *The Dharma at Big Sur*, movement II, mm. 370-375.\(^{132}\)

![Example 4.15](image)

The trumpet’s concert D\(_\sharp\)\(^6\) is passed off to the electric violin soloist on beat two of measure 375, so it is imperative that the note has a strong presence and is in tune. If this note is too difficult to tune, the trumpet player may consider using an E\(_b\) trumpet and transposing down a half step. Adams again calls for a concert D\(_\sharp\)\(^6\) on D trumpet in measures 629-631 of Movement II.

Another notable facet of *The Dharma at Big Sur* is Adams’s treatment of the three trumpet parts as solo voices. Staggered trumpet entrances, pyramid effects, and cascading lines are found at various points throughout this piece. From mm. 88-136, as well as mm. 179-232 of Movement I, two sections in which the trumpets play frequently, every single trumpet entrance is staggered or a solo.

Adams’s next work to use trumpets is his 2005 opera, *Doctor Atomic*.\(^{133}\) The San Francisco Opera commissioned this work and gave the premiere performance under the baton of Donald Runnicles.\(^{134}\) This opera is written for three trumpets in C, with the first trumpet doubling on piccolo trumpet in B\(_b\). Straight mutes are required for some of the C trumpet passages. All three trumpet parts offer challenges in the areas of rhythmic

\(^{132}\) Musical examples from *The Dharma at Big Sur: The Dharma at Big Sur* by John Adams. © Copyright by Hendon Music, Inc., A Boosey & Hawkes company. Copyright for all countries. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission.


precision, section playing, intonation, wide intervallic leaps, finger dexterity, and short, articulate playing.

In 2007, Adams wrote *Doctor Atomic Symphony*, a composition in which he sets several of scenes from the opera with instrumentalists covering the original vocal lines.\(^{135}\) There are many similarities between the trumpet parts of these two works, so this section will only discuss the unique trumpet elements found solely in the 2005 opera. Further discussion of *Doctor Atomic Symphony* is contained in Chapter 10.

*Doctor Atomic* includes a particularly challenging first trumpet part. In addition to multiple exposed C trumpet solos, there are several exposed piccolo trumpet solos that can be optionally played offstage. The score appears to give the option that a separate, fourth performer could play the offstage piccolo trumpet parts. This does not seem to be particularly necessary, as the offstage parts are surrounded by an ample amount of rests that should typically allow the principal trumpet enough time to head offstage and return to the pit without missing any entrances.

The first trumpet part of this opera contains the highest trumpet notes in Adams’s oeuvre: concert F\(^6\), which is found in the B\(^\flat\) piccolo trumpet sections in Act I, Scene 1 and at the beginning of Act II. Example 4.16 shows the first of these passages, as well as the interplay of the second and third trumpet parts. The concert F\(^6\) in measure 87 is not the only challenge in this passage. Adams’s typical treatment of the trumpets as independent voices is on display here, and it is important that the trumpets match style as they pass off their statements.

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Example 4.16: Adams, *Doctor Atomic*, Act I, Scene 1, mm. 79-87.\textsuperscript{136}

The other instance of a concert F$^6$ can be seen in Example 4.17, found in Act II.


\textsuperscript{136} Musical examples from *Doctor Atomic: Doctor Atomic* by John Adams. © Copyright Hendon Music, Inc., A Boosey & Hawkes company. Copyright for all countries. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission.
Just as in Example 4.16, the concert F₆ in measure 9 of Example 4.17 is only one of the challenges in the passage. Rhythmic precision is necessary, and with a marked tempo of quarter note = 60, subdivision is the only way to make sure that the thirty-second notes, quintuplet sixteenth notes, and various levels of triplets are placed properly. The accompaniment of this piccolo trumpet fanfare is rather atmospheric, making a strong internal pulse, as well as an eye on the conductor, essential.

A few of the optional offstage piccolo trumpet solos actually utilize a lower tessitura than the passages found in Examples 4.16 and 4.17. The first such passage, found in mm. 217-226 of Act I, Scene 2, spans a range of concert E⁴ to A⁵. This particular passage could easily be played on C trumpet, but it is possible that Adams uses piccolo trumpet in order to improve execution and accuracy or to achieve a particular timbre. Another similar offstage piccolo trumpet passage can be found in mm. 675-684 of Act I, Scene 3. The player may choose to use a C trumpet on these passages if the tone and intonation in the low register of his or her piccolo trumpet are particularly unsteady.

Some of the challenges for the C trumpet parts include a passage of fast, articulated sixteenth notes with wide interval jumps from mm. 598-624 in Act I, Scene 3. For most of the passage, the line is played in unison by all three trumpets. Near the end of this passage, Adams has the first trumpet ascend to D⁶. Later, an exposed trumpet solo can be found in mm. 117-130 of Act II, Scene 1. This lyrical solo requires the first trumpet to slur rising phrases that repeatedly ascend to A⁵ and B⁵.

In Act II, Scene 2, Adams writes a passage in mm. 119-130 for brass in which the trumpets have several large intervallic slurs. The first trumpet, for example, has to slur minor tenths, major tenths, and diminished elevenths. The section trumpets have
challenging slurs as well, and this passage will test any trumpet section’s flexibility, rhythm, and blending skills. In mm. 413-429 of Act II, Scene 4, interspersed over an incredibly sparse texture, Adams writes 11 solo iterations of sustained, muted G₅ pitches in the first trumpet part. A crescendo is marked on each G₅, so this whole passage requires a player who has rock-steady control of pitch and tone production.

Adams completed his next opera, *A Flowering Tree*, in 2006. The New Crowned Hope Festival, the Barbican Centre, the San Francisco Symphony, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, and the Berlin Philharmonic commissioned this work. Modeled on of Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*, *A Flowering Tree* was premiered in 2006 at the New Crowned Hope Festival, a festival in honor of the 250th anniversary of Mozart’s birth. The premiere took place in Vienna, Austria, with Adams leading the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra and the Schola Cantorum of Venezuela.

*A Flowering Tree* calls for two trumpets in C, with the first trumpet doubling on piccolo trumpet in B♭. Standard and piccolo trumpet straight mutes are required. The trumpet parts include several passages that are highly syncopated and rhythmically complex. Short, articulate playing, a hallmark of Adams’s trumpet writing style, is also found throughout the opera. In Act I, Scene 4, “The Wedding,” Adams writes a low articulate line for the first trumpet (Example 4.18). For this passage, the performer may wish to use a metal mute that allows for a focused sound and crisp forte attacks in the low register.

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Example 4.18: Adams, *A Flowering Tree*, Act I, Scene 4, mm. 475-476.\(^{139}\)

With a tempo marking of quarter note = 120, the stuttering triplet rhythms may be difficult to play without rushing, especially when wide intervallic leaps are encountered. Slow practicing in order to ensure proper centering, intonation, and coordination is recommended.

Act II of *A Flowering Tree* beings with a long, sostenuto line in the horns and trombones that is eventually passed to the trumpets. In this passage, Adams has the two trumpets begin playing in unison before giving the first and second trumpets some linear independence (Example 4.19). At the beginning of this section, Adams writes, “Winds & Brass: sostenuto; no break between phrases.”\(^ {140}\) Therefore, it is essential for the trumpets to strive for smooth connections between slurred notes. The two trumpets’ ability to blend and match styles is also on display in this excerpt. The forte dynamic should be played fully and resonantly rather than forcefully and aggressively. This approach also allows for a logical pacing of the crescendos that ultimately lead up to the fortissimo D\(^6\) in measure 26.

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\(^{139}\) Musical examples from *A Flowering Tree: A Flowering Tree* by John Adams. © Copyright 2007 by Hendon Music, Inc., A Boosey & Hawkes company. Copyright for all countries. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission.

\(^{140}\) Adams, *A Flowering Tree*, 207.
Another notable moment in the trumpet parts of this opera takes place from mm. 157-167 of Act II, Scene 1. In this passage, the principal player uses a muted piccolo trumpet in B♭ to play a staccato eighth-note line that includes concert E⁶ pitches. At the same time, the second trumpet executes a similar line that rises up to C⁶.

Another example of independence of parts exists in Act II, Scene 2, “Kumudha’s Failed Transformation.” In measure 207, the first trumpet begins a piano muted solo line. Marked “molto sostenuto, dolce, ‘lontano,’” the first trumpet plays a line that features
large intervals, such as octaves and minor sevenths. In measure 211, the second trumpet part, also marked “molto sostenuto, dolce, ‘lontano,’” echoes the first trumpet part. The second trumpet line also features large intervals, including octaves and minor ninths.

Finally, *A Flowering Tree* contains a lyrical solo in the first trumpet that illustrates Adams’s characteristic trumpet style. Found in measure 256 of Act II, Scene 2, this unmuted trumpet line contains wide intervals typical of Adams’s music (Example 4.20).

Example 4.20: Adams, *A Flowering Tree*, Act II, Scene 2, mm. 256-270.

The scoring of this passage is rather thin, with the chorus singing quietly and the strings playing soft pizzicati. The exposed trumpet part requires great finesse and musical direction throughout. Intonation is also a concern, especially in measure 266. In this bar, the trumpet’s G⁴ must be solid, as the character of Kamudha, a soprano, sings a G⁵ on beat two. An additional soft, “molto tranquillo” lyrical solo is found in mm. 340-353 of Act II, Scene 4, “Kamudha and the Beggar Minstrels.”
Adams’s next orchestral work, *Doctor Atomic Symphony*, was composed in 2007. Based on musical material from *Doctor Atomic* (2005), this work calls for four trumpets in C, with the fourth trumpet doubling on piccolo trumpet in B♭. This work requires both standard trumpet and piccolo trumpet straight mutes. In addition to many of the challenging parts found in *Doctor Atomic*, *Doctor Atomic Symphony* has several important trumpet solos that are not found in the original opera. *Doctor Atomic Symphony* is examined in Chapter 10.

Also composed in 2007, *Son of Chamber Symphony* was the result of a commission from Stanford University, Carnegie Hall, and the San Francisco Ballet. Alan Pierson conducted the ensemble Alarm Will Sound for the premiere performance, which took place at Stanford University in Palo Alto, CA. This work uses one trumpet in C and requires a straight mute.

Measures 22-91 of the first movement are typical of Adams’s music, wherein the trumpet part is highly rhythmic and demands articulate, short playing across the whole range of the instrument. Beginning in measure 102, Adams writes a trumpet line that tests the performer’s finger dexterity and flexibility (Example 4.21). With a tempo marking of quarter note = 116, it can be challenging to execute cleanly all the quick 1-2-3 and 2-3 valve combinations. The performer should experiment in order to decide if lip slurs or alternate fingerings are the most efficient way to execute the frequent E♭₅ - G♭₅.

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141 Adams, *Doctor Atomic Symphony*.


slurs. Starting in measure 108, the solo is doubled in the piano, so it is important that the trumpet player has a strong, steady internal pulse.

**Example 4.21: Adams, *Son of Chamber Symphony*, movement I, mm. 102-119.**

The pianissimo, muted lines in the beginning measures of Movement II also present challenges to the performer. While these sustained lines are more accompanimental than soloistic, they still require finessed lyrical playing and accurate subdivision. Later in the movement, following a section that includes several sforzando D⁶ “bullets,” Adams writes a lyrical trumpet solo. Starting in measure 159, this solo

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144 Musical examples from *Son of Chamber Symphony: Son of Chamber Symphony* by John Adams. © Copyright Hendon Music, Inc., A Boosey & Hawkes company. Copyright for all countries. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission.
shows the wide, soaring intervals associated with Adams’ s lyrical trumpet writing (Example 4.22).

**Example 4.22: Adams, *Son of Chamber Symphony*, movement II, mm. 159-171.**

Due to the perfect eleventh and major tenth leaps, as well as the octave slurs, this excerpt requires great flexibility and control. Proper centering of notes and intonation is also incredibly important, as the piccolo and oboe double the melody line starting in measure 162.

Similar to Movement I, Movement III is highlighted by short, rhythmic ostinato-like figures in the trumpet part. The opening 34 measures of this movement include large intervallic leaps, such as octaves and major tenths. Adams also writes a slurred major ninth (A♭⁴ - B♭⁵) in the passage from mm. 220-235.

Adams’ s next orchestral piece is the 2009 composition *City Noir*. Written for four trumpets in C and using straight mutes and Harmon mutes with no stem, this work features a long, lyrical trumpet solo in the third movement. *City Noir* also contains several trumpet passages that offer challenges in the areas of rhythmic precision, section

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playing, finger dexterity, and flexibility. Chapter 11 provides a discussion of this composition in greater detail.

In 2012, Adams composed Absolute Jest for string quartet and orchestra. This work was commissioned by the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra to celebrate the orchestra’s centennial. Michael Tilson Thomas conducted the St. Lawrence String Quartet and the San Francisco Symphony for the premiere performance. Later that same year, Adams revised Absolute Jest, recomposing the majority of the first movement. The debut of the revised version also took place in 2012, with Adams conducting the St. Lawrence String Quartet and the New World Symphony in Miami Beach, FL.

Absolute Jest calls for two trumpets in C, with the first trumpet doubling on piccolo trumpet in B♭. Standard trumpet and piccolo trumpet straight mutes are needed. Both the trumpet in C and the piccolo trumpet sections in the first trumpet part rise up to concert D. Adams’s choice of piccolo trumpet for certain passages facilitates the execution of repeated high-register notes, as seen in the articulate piccolo trumpet solo in mm. 567-573. This solo only spans a range of concert E to concert B, but the multiple leaps up to concert B are slightly easier when played on piccolo trumpet. It is also possible that Adams writes for piccolo trumpet in order to create timbral contrast between the piccolo trumpet and C trumpet passages. Later, in mm. 1020-1054, Adams writes a section that includes several concert D pitches. Once again, he wisely scores this part for piccolo trumpet.

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Some other challenges found in this work include a section of fast trills in mm. 659-662, as well as a passage from mm. 946-954 in which the two trumpets play alternating eighth-note rhythms in order to form a composite line. This last passage displays Adams’s characteristic individual treatment of the two trumpet parts. *Absolute Jest* also contains several solo lines in the second trumpet part.

Also completed in 2012, *The Gospel According to the Other Mary* is a massive, two-hour long oratorio that was originally commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic Association, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the Barbican, the Lucerne Festival, Cité de la musique-Salle Pleyel, and the NTR ZaterdagMatinee.\(^{148}\) Gustavo Dudamel led the Los Angeles Philharmonic in the world premiere in 2012.\(^{149}\) While this work is Adams’s second oratorio, it is his first oratorio to include trumpets. Adams’s oratorio *El Niño* (2000) includes only horns and trombones in the brass scoring.

*The Gospel According to the Other Mary* calls for two trumpets in C, using straight mutes, cardboard mutes, and, for the first time in Adams’s compositional output, bucket mutes. For measure 228 of Act II, Scene 3, “Golgotha,” the composer specifies, “straight mute with as mellow a sound a possible.”\(^{150}\) As one would expect from a large-scale Adams composition, the trumpet parts of this oratorio features several lyrical solos, instances of part independence, staccato, articulate sections, and passages that require excellent control of dynamics. One passage that highlights Adams’s challenging trumpet writing in this piece is found in mm. 97-102 of Act I, Scene 1 (Example 4.23).

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Example 4.23: Adams, *The Gospel According to the Other Mary*, Act I, Scene 1, mm. 97-102.\(^{151}\)

With a tempo marking of quarter note = 120, the music in Example 4.23 lies on the border between where most players transition between single and double tonguing. Therefore, the first trumpet must decide which method of tonguing is optimum for the execution of this passage. In addition to the short, fast articulations, this excerpt requires both players to have rhythmic integrity, a firm pulse, and the ability to execute large intervallic leaps. This passage also requires attentive ensemble playing, as the horns and trombones also play the rhythmic figures found in Example 4.23. Later in the piece, in mm. 80-87 of Act II, Scene 1, “The Arrest of Jesus,” Adams writes another passage that features quick, short articulations, wide intervals, and the passing of material between the two trumpets.

\(^{151}\) Musical examples from *The Gospel According to the Other Mary: The Gospel According to the Other Mary* by John Adams. © Copyright by Hendon Music, Inc., A Boosey & Hawkes company. Copyright for all countries. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission.
Another example of Adams’s characteristic lyrical trumpet writing is found in mm. 45-54 of Act I’s “Chorus: Drop Down, ye Heavens.” This soft, sustained melody is shown in Example 4.24. Once again, Adams’s trumpet writing demands smooth, slurred connections over large intervals, such as minor sixths, major sixths, and minor sevenths. With a tempo marking of half note = 82, these slurs occur fairly quickly.


It is important that the player does not rush or overemphasize the intervallic leaps. The first trumpet must perform the line in a nuanced, singing manner. Another lyrical mezzo-piano trumpet solo with wide leaps, such as major sevenths and major ninths, is found in mm. 293-303 of Act I, Scene 5.

In Act II, Scene 2, “The Arrest of the Women,” Adams writes an aggressive trumpet passage that calls for flexibility, strength, and solid rhythm from both trumpets (Example 4.25). Marked “coarse, blaring,” this passage features frequent large intervallic leaps, such as the slurred augmented octave in the first trumpet in measure 25 and the tongued minor ninth in the second trumpet in measure 20. Efficient air movement, as
well as a centered tone on all pitches, is essential to playing this fortissimo disjunct line successfully. Intonation and balance can also be a challenge in this excerpt, as the two trumpet lines move between minor second dissonances and consonant intervals.

**Example 4.25: Adams, *The Gospel According to the Other Mary*, Scene 2, mm. 18-32.**

Two final, notable elements of *The Gospel According to the Other Mary* are found in Act II, Scene 6, “Earthquake and Recognition.” At the beginning of this scene, Adams writes a note, “Woodwinds and Brass: observe exact locations of dynamics in the bar.” The trumpets must observe this direction closely, as the various staggered woodwind and brass crescendos and decrescendos create a texture akin to Klangfarbenmelodie on the pitches D♭ and A♭. Later, in mm. 169-174, Adams calls for...
an extended technique (Example 4.26). In this passage, Adams has the trumpets “exhale through [the] instrument.”


As of 2013, this is the first and only occurrence of this particular extended technique in all of Adams’s trumpet parts. While exhaling through the instrument is not difficult, the coordination of this passage may require some planning. Ideally, players should begin this excerpt with mutes under their arms or in their laps. With a beginning tempo of quarter note $= 63$, the trumpets swell to forte before cutting off the note before measure 172. The players must then quickly exhale air through the instrument. Simultaneously, the players should be preparing for the insertion of straight mutes for the entrance in measure 173, which begins in a slightly faster tempo (quarter note $= 66$). By thinking through the play/exhale/insert mute/play coordination a few times, the trumpets can avoid late entrances or missteps.

To date, Adams’s most recent composition is Saxophone Concerto. Completed and premiered in 2013, this work was written for Tim McAllister, the saxophonist who played on the premiere performance of *City Noir*. The Sydney Symphony Orchestra, the Saint Louis Symphony, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, and Orquesta Sinfonica

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Do Estado De Sao Paulo Foundation commissioned Saxophone Concerto. Adams, McAllister, and The Sydney Symphony Orchestra gave the world premiere performance.\textsuperscript{154}

This concerto requires two trumpets in C, with sections that utilize cardboard mutes and straight mutes. As of 2013, this is the last of four Adams works that do not rise to C\textsuperscript{6} (the highest note is B\textsuperscript{5} in the first trumpet). Saxophone Concerto still presents several challenges in the areas of rhythmic precision, short, articulate playing, wide intervallic leaps, and low register playing. Adams also treats the two trumpets with occasional independence, writing lines that pass between the two players.

Starting in measure 334 of Movement I, Adams writes a passage in the first trumpet that calls for fast staccato articulations in the low register (Example 4.27). With a marked tempo of half note = 72, this passage requires a light articulation so that the player does not drag. Finger technique and flexibility are also challenged, especially in measure 339. In this measure, slow practice may be necessary in order to obtain proper coordination and centering of the D\textsubscript{4} and G\textsubscript{3} pitches.

Example 4.27: Adams, Saxophone Concerto, movement I, mm. 334-341.¹⁵⁵

In Movement II of Saxophone Concerto, the first trumpet plays short statements that double (measure 33) or respond to the saxophone melody (mm. 55-57). Later in the movement, the trumpets frequently exchange short motives, as in the passages from mm. 64-74, 102-119, and 184-199. These passages usually include quick slurred figures or short articulate eighth notes.

After surveying Adams’s oeuvre, several salient features of his trumpet parts emerge. The characteristics of his trumpet writing include: frequent exploitation of the upper register, the presence of long passages that test a player’s endurance, rhythmic complexity, the regular requirement of extremely short articulations, wide intervallic leaps, the presence of passages that require finger dexterity and agility, the common use of swells and sudden dynamic shifts, independence of parts, and the inclusion of passages that are challenging in regards to section and ensemble playing. This overview highlights the numerous substantial trumpet parts in Adams’s canon. Additionally, it demonstrates

¹⁵⁵ Musical examples from Saxophone Concerto: Saxophone Concerto by John Adams. © Copyright 2013 Hendon Music, Inc., A Boosey & Hawkes company. Copyright for all countries. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission.
how Adams’s trumpet writing mirrors his development as a composer. The challenges of Adams’s early pieces often stem from the endurance issues created by the repeating elements inherent to minimalism. As Adams matured as a composer, the challenges in his works began to reflect a virtuosic and idiomatic approach to trumpet writing. This understanding of Adams’s evolution as a composer, as well as the characteristics of his trumpet style, helps in the study, preparation, and interpretation of eight of his most challenging works for trumpet players.
John Adams completed *Harmonielehre* in 1985 in fulfillment of a commission for the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra’s *Meet the Composer* orchestra residency program. Edo de Waart conducted the San Francisco Symphony for the premiere performance of this work, which took place on March 21, 1985. A three-movement symphony, this piece is, according to Adams, an “essay in the wedding of fin-de-siècle chromatic harmony with the rhythmic and formal procedures of Minimalism.” The influences of Mahler, Debussy, Sibelius, and Schoenberg permeate *Harmonielehre*, which shares its title with Schoenberg’s 1911 tonal harmony treatise. At the same time, repeating rhythms and stepwise melodies spanning small ranges, typical of Minimalism, occur at several points in this composition.

*Harmonielehre* is in three movements: Part I, Part II: “The Anfortas Wound,” and Part III: “Meister Eckhardt and Quackie.” Part I is the longest movement of the three, lasting more than 17 minutes. According to the composer, the first movement is in an “inverted arch-form.” The beginning and ending of Part I features pulsating, repeated E-minor chords. Adams says that the idea for these energetic chords came to him after

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158 Adams, “John Adams | Harmonielehre.”

159 Ibid.
having a dream in which a tanker (boat) “took off like a rocket.” The middle section of Part I is highlighted by lyricism, with a less aggressive tempo than the outer sections. According to the composer, this middle section is “full of Sehnsucht,” which can be translated as “yearning.”

Part II: “The Anfortas Wound” takes its title from the Medieval French poet Crêtien de Troyes’s treatment of the mythological character Anfortas. Anfortas was a king who had wounds that could not be healed. As such, this movement deals with pain, sadness, and powerlessness. A slow movement, Part II contains a challenging, exposed lyrical trumpet solo.

Part III: “Meister Eckhardt and Quackie” takes its name from another one of Adams’s dreams. In this particular dream, Adams’s daughter, nicknamed “Quackie,” rides the shoulders of “Meister Eckhardt,” a mystic from the thirteenth century. This movement begins with a soft section that is marked, “Slowly rocking.” After a period of “harmonic struggle” in which the music become denser and quicker, Harmonielehre ends triumphantly in E♭ major.

This work calls for four trumpets in C. Straight mutes are used for certain passages. The first trumpet part includes a long, soft solo in Part II, and multiple passages in all three movements utilize the upper register. All four trumpet parts are

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161 Ibid., 104.

162 Ibid, 105

163 Adams, “John Adams | Harmonielehre.”

164 Adams, Harmonielehre, 136.

challenging, with long stretches of fatiguing, ostinati-like figures, unison passages in the upper register, and, near the end of Part III, overlapping solo lines.

Part I

The opening passage of Harmonielehre immediately poses rhythmic and ensemble challenges. Trumpets 1-3, along with the low woodwinds, brass, piano, and timpani, play accented, E-minor fff chords over the first 16 measures of Part I. The rhythmic challenges are created by the diminution of the opening E-minor chords. Marked with a tempo of half note = 116, the eighth note stays constant as the time signature changes from 7/2 to 12/8 and from 9/8 to 2/2 (Example 5.1).

The rhythmic diminution in the opening five measures creates the sense of an accelerando. It is very important that the trumpets do not add to this natural accelerando by rushing. Throughout this section, the flutes play constant eighth-note arpeggios, but it is unlikely that the trumpets will be able to hear these lines over the other brass and timpani. Therefore, a strong internal pulse, as well as constant subdivision, is necessary to avoid the temptation to rush through this passage. In order to practice this section, a player might start by playing slowly with a metronome beating eighth notes. After several successful repetitions, speed should be increased gradually.

In measure 7 of Example 5.1, the time signature changes to 3/4. The eighth note remains constant from the previous 2/2 measure and now the dotted half note gets the beat. In order to ensure that the fff quarter note is placed properly on beat three in mm. 7-11, the first and second trumpets should listen to the third trumpet, which plays a
quarter-note G on beat two of each of these measures. The first and fourth horns, as well as the second and third trombones, also play G pitches on beat two of mm. 7-11.

Example 5.1: Adams, Harmonielehre, Part I, mm. 1-16.

All of the notes in the opening bars are marked with a staccatissimo symbol or “sim.” This articulation symbol suggests a slight accent and separation between all of the pitches, as the staccatissimo markings also appear on the sustained, tied notes in mm. 12-

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166 Musical examples from Harmonielehre: Harmonielehre by John Adams. © Copyright 1985 Associated Music Publishers, Inc. All rights reserved. International Copyright Secured. Reprinted by permission.
15. The trumpets must work to match the rest of the orchestra, as this articulation marking appears in the other homorhythmic parts.

This passage is the first of many throughout *Harmonielehre* that challenge the trumpets’ control of intonation and dynamics. G⁵, the note in the first trumpet from mm. 1-16, is the sixth partial on the open harmonic series, and it is naturally sharp.¹⁶⁷ G is the minor third of the E-minor chords that pervade this section. Since minor thirds lie 16 cents sharp in equal temperament, the first trumpet’s adjustment might not need to be too severe.¹⁶⁸ However, the player must also consider how other factors, such as the increasingly quick articulations and the dynamic changes, effect intonation. The first trumpet must be sure not to let the pitch drop with repeated articulations or let the pitch rise during the diminuendo at the end of the passage. If the second trumpet plays a firm, strong tonic E⁵ (avoiding the flat tendencies of open E⁵) and the third trumpet plays a solid G⁴ to support the first trumpet’s note one octave higher, the chord will find the proper balance. The section players must also deal with the effects of articulations and dynamics on intonation. Practicing this passage with a drone on G or E can be highly beneficial.

Later in the movement, a short passage of offbeat E-minor chords similar in style to the opening bars appears in mm. 49-58. The fourth trumpet makes its first entrance in the next passage, where the trumpet section plays soft, *sostenuto* repeated quarter-note E-minor chords. This time, the chords are complete, with the third trumpet playing B⁴, the fifth of the chord. This section, which begins in measure 66, leads into a key change in


¹⁶⁸ Ibid, 298.
measure 70. Now in E♭ major, the trumpets switch to an E♭-major seventh chord in second inversion. In this section, the trumpets and horns take up a half-note offbeat figure that is reminiscent of the movement’s initial statement. This passage has more harmonic motion and dissonances than the previous sections, and the staccato and legato markings should be closely observed. The piano dynamic in measure 76, where the E-minor chords reappear, should be treated as a subito piano so that the following crescendo to forte is effective. Adams has the second trumpet take over for the first trumpet in mm. 81-85. At this point, the second trumpet should lead until the F♭5 pitches are passed back to the first trumpet in measure 86.

The first use of straight mute appears in measure 136. At this point in the piece, all four trumpets repeatedly play a short, staccatissimo eighth-note figure (Example 5.2).

**Example 5.2: Adams, Harmonielehre, Part I, mm. 136-140.**

These soli rhythmic figures, which hint at syncopation, must be played precisely and crisply. While single tonguing works for the section, double tonguing is also an option. Tonguing patterns such as “T-K, K-T-K” or “T-K, T-T-K” can work well for the rhythmic figure in measure 136. Since these articulate eighth-note figures continue for
quite some time after the measures shown in Example 5.2, double tonguing can help
players avoid the tongue fatigue that may be encountered when repeatedly single
tonguing. No matter which pattern the section uses, it is important that the articulations
have a light quality. The dynamic marking for most of this section is mezzo forte.
Therefore, overplaying or over-articulating the eighth notes is counterproductive.

After the measures shown in Example 5.2, the staccatissimo eighth notes continue
with changes in the voicing and harmonies. In mm. 157-164, the first trumpet drops out,
so the second trumpet should lead during this section. The first trumpet rejoins the other
trumpets in measure 165, where Adams returns to the G₄ - A₄ - D₅ - A₅ chord found
throughout Example 5.2. At this point, the syncopated statement is played on every beat
until measure 171. Here the trumpets’ statements become less frequent and progressively
softer. The trumpets’ short eighth-note rhythms end after the key change in measure 176.

The next passage for trumpets takes place from 198-209. This section features
two sustained, muted C-minor triads in trumpets 1-3. A softer straight mute, made out of
cardboard, fiber, wood, or plastic may be a good option. The first chord, held for six
measures, diminuendos to ppp in measure 203. After a measure of rest, the same chord is
played, this time for five measures, with a diminuendo in the last bar, measure 209. This
passage, however simple it may seem on the page, offers some challenges in the areas of
dynamic control, intonation, and sustained production. Practicing long tones against a
drone, checking intonation with a tuner, and experimenting with different mute options
can improve the execution of this passage. Additionally, practicing techniques for
efficiently breathing and moving air, such as those found in *The Breathing Gym*, is also helpful.\textsuperscript{169}

Later in the movement, in the passage from mm. 253-260, trumpets 1-3 softly play two open, sustained F-minor triads. This chord is juxtaposed with an E♭-minor seventh chord in the horns, trombones, and tubas. The trumpets must blend with the rest of the brass during this passage, so that the dissonances are subtle rather than aggressive.

Following solos by the first horn and the strings, the next trumpet entrance takes place in measure 288, with the fourth trumpet playing a muted, sustained E♭\textsuperscript{4}. This note, which is doubled by the cellos and basses, clashes with the simultaneous D-minor chord played by the trombones. The other three trumpets, also muted, join the fourth trumpet in measure 290. At this point, the four trumpets play offbeat, rapidly decaying chords underneath a soaring string melody. Eventually, the trumpets make a crescendo to forte, playing accented E-minor chords. In measure 304, the first trumpet rises to B\textsuperscript{5}, which, up to this point, is the highest trumpet note in the piece. Despite the arrival on B\textsuperscript{5}, the first trumpet, as well as the rest of the trumpet section, should make sure to observe the mezzo-forte dynamic in measure 304. The high point of the phrase takes place on beat two of measure 304, where the violins and flutes crescendo up to a fortissimo E♭. By playing at a mezzo-forte dynamic, the trumpets allow the climax to be properly perceived by the audience.

After a section of rests for the trumpets between mm. 307-322, the fourth trumpet enters in measure 323, playing a sustained E♭\textsuperscript{4} that is doubled in the first horn part. At the same time, the trombones hold a G-minor chord. In measure 327, the fourth trumpet

\textsuperscript{169} Sam Pilafian and Pat Sheridan, *The Breathing Gym Daily Workouts* (Mesa, AZ: Focus on Music, 2009), DVD.
swells to mezzo forte and rises to F\textsuperscript{4} on beat two. This crescendo to an F\textsuperscript{4}, as well as the ensuing decrescendo and return to E\textsuperscript{4} in measure 328, is effectively a small solo line for the fourth trumpet. While not the most glamorous of solos, it illustrates one of Adams’s characteristics of his trumpet writing: independence of parts.

The next trumpet passage takes place from mm. 410-415. In this section, the trumpets, as well as the rest of the brass, play mezzo-piano chords that rapidly swell and diminish underneath a fortissimo string melody. In measure 413, the trumpets, trombones, and tubas arrive at a mezzo-forte C-dominant ninth chord before making a decrescendo to piano and beyond in the following two measures. This passage can be especially tricky for the first and second trumpets, as these parts require the players to properly pace the diminuendo on B\textsubscript{♭}\textsuperscript{5} and G\textsuperscript{5} respectively.

Trumpets 1-3 reenter in measure 450, joining the horns with loudening, staccato eighth-note figures. This passage highlights another characteristic of Adams’s trumpet writing: long stretches of ostinati-like rhythmic figures (Example 5.3). Similar to the section beginning in measure 136 (Example 5.2), the passage in Example 5.3 can work with either single tongue or double tongue patterns. After this excerpt, the trumpets continue playing in a similar manner until measure 497. The sheer length of this whole passage, combined with near-constant short articulations, makes tongue fatigue a factor. Therefore, double tonguing, or some combination of single tonguing and double tonguing, should be seriously considered for this excerpt.

Adams rests the first trumpet in mm. 460-463, so the second trumpet should make sure to take the lead during these bars. At this point, the fourth trumpet also enters, playing the bottom voice of the trumpet chords. When the first trumpet returns in measure 464, the four trumpets play an E♭-major chord over a fortissimo trombone and tuba line. The first trumpet plays frequent, repeated G⁵ pitches, and must pay close attention to intonation.

Some of Adams’s typical linear independence appears later in the passage. In measure 470, the third and fourth trumpets break off from the articulated eighth-note figures, playing B♭ pitches with the tubas (Example 5.4). From mm. 474-483, the third and fourth trumpets play independently of the first and second trumpets. Playing in
octaves and doubled in the low brass, the third and fourth trumpets should play a resonant forte so as to cut through the heavy orchestration.

**Example 5.4: Adams, *Harmonielehre*, Part I, mm. 470-483.**
The third trumpet player should lead the crescendos in Example 5.4, especially in mm. 481-483. This particular E♭-B♭ slur is truly a solo line, and it must crescendo to fortissimo in order to set up the key change effectively in measure 483.

As the first trumpet line is sustaining B♭₅, the third and fourth trumpets restate the syncopated eighth-note motive in measure 484. The third trumpet continues playing the top voice as the first and second trumpets rest in measure 486. Once again, Adams gives the first trumpet a chance to recover from all the repeated B♭₅ pitches in the previous bars. In measure 487, the second trumpet joins the third and fourth trumpets as the first trumpet continues resting. Adams is thoughtful of the second trumpet’s endurance as well, and has the second trumpet play the bottom of the chord when reentering.

In measure 491, the first trumpet returns as the top voice. The articulation of the rhythmic figure broadens slightly with the appearance of tenuto markings on the tied eight notes and quarter notes. These tenuto markings should be observed closely by all of the brass instruments so as to create contrast between the surrounding staccato eighth notes.

After 27 measures of rest, the third and fourth trumpets play a diminished chord with the trombones and tubas in mm. 525-527. A few measures later, the first and second trumpets play a unison figure. Example 5.5, which begins in measure 530, shows this trumpet line.

**Example 5.5: Adams, Harmonielehre, Part I, mm. 530-534.**
This particular excerpt shows another characteristic of Adams’ trumpet music: the utilization of the upper register of the trumpet. As the first and second rise up to A°, the first trumpet splits off from the unison and slurs up to D°, the highest trumpet pitch in *Harmonielehre*. After the first and second trumpets end their note in measure 534, Adams once again displays independence of parts in his trumpet writing. The third and fourth trumpets take over from mm. 534-541, playing a staccatissimo eighth-note line that is interspersed with tied notes. Adams has the second trumpet take over for the first trumpet again in mm. 542-548. At this point, the second trumpet joins the third and fourth trumpets, now playing the muted top voice of the eighth-note line.

The endurance challenges of Adams’s music are highlighted again when the first trumpet reenters in measure 549. Playing the top voice of the rhythmic figure, now at fortissimo, the first trumpet part consists entirely of sustained or short, repeated A° pitches until measure 558. At this point in the piece, this could be especially fatiguing.

Following a section in mm. 561-568 wherein all four trumpets use straight mutes as they play “bullets,” Adams has the trumpets play short repeated sixteenth-note figures. Part I draws to a close with a return to the opening E-minor chords, this time played as fff, accented offbeat figures. Adams has the first and second trumpets play doubled G° notes from mm. 581 to 594. With the added factors of fatigue and unison playing in this passage, both players must maintain a strong awareness and control of pitch.

**Part II: The Anfortas Wound**

One of Adams’s simplest, yet most challenging lyrical trumpet solos occurs in measure 52 of the second movement of *Harmonielehre*. Marked mezzo piano, this
unmuted solo presents challenges in the areas of soft, sustained lyrical playing, endurance, high register playing, and musical phrasing. Example 5.6 shows this solo, as well as the trumpet section chords that occasionally accompany the first trumpet.

**Example 5.6: Adams, *Harmonielehre*, Part II, mm. 52-86.**
This exposed trumpet solo, while only containing five separate pitches (E⁵, F⁵, G⁵, A⁵, and B⁵) lasts for nearly 90 seconds. This solo requires finessed, resonant playing at the mezzo-piano and mezzo-forte dynamic levels, all while contending with the factors of fatigue, intonation, and playing in the upper register.¹⁷⁰

Adams refers to the passage in Example 5.6 as “a long, elegiac trumpet solo [that] floats over a delicately shifting screen of minor triads that pass like spectral shapes from one family to the other.”¹⁷¹ In the score, Adams writes a note for the conductor: “Throughout this section (until measure 85), the solo trumpet should be the principal voice. All other instruments should be softer and heard as background.”¹⁷²

Part II: “The Anfortas Wound” deals with pain and sickness. This plaintive trumpet solo must convey these emotions with the proper timbre and color. Although it is a solo, the first trumpet must not play too loudly. By closely observing the mezzo-piano and mezzo-forte dynamics, the soloist can achieve the shimmering, vocal tone that is required of this excerpt.

The final chord in measure 51 (an A-minor chord in flute and piccolos, harp, and celeste) sets the up trumpet’s entrance in the following measure. The trumpet enters on G⁵ in measure 52, adding the minor seventh to an A-minor seventh chord. The seventh of a minor seventh chord lies 18 cents sharp in equal temperament.¹⁷³ Since G⁵ is naturally a sharp note on C trumpet, the first trumpet player may only have to make a

¹⁷⁰ Ball, 75.
¹⁷¹ Adams, “John Adams | Harmonielehre.”
¹⁷² Adams, Harmonielehre, 115.
¹⁷³ Hickman, 298.
slight adjustment. The soft dynamic levels, as well as possible fatigue from playing the preceding movement, may require the player to make additional pitch adjustments.

Throughout this excerpt, the first player must make sure to give the long, sustained notes forward direction and energy. A slight intensification of the tone with some subtle vibrato can give the long notes momentum without unnecessary, overt crescendos. The written crescendos and decrescendos should be carefully paced, rising only to mezzo forte and returning back to mezzo piano in a logical, musical way. The legato articulations should also be closely followed in order to create smooth, vocal-like changes between pitches.

Measures 80-86, which contain repeated tritone intervals between F⁵ and B⁵, mark the dynamic climax of the trumpet solo. Starting in measure 81, the oboe doubles the melody. The first trumpet must keep a singing mezzo-forte tone while matching intonation with the oboe.

This excerpt requires great control of sustained, high register playing. Practicing long tones, as well as practicing the solo with a metronome, drone, and/or tuner will help the player gain security of execution. Proper pacing of breath and airflow is also essential. In many ways, this solo has many of the same challenges as the trumpet solos found in the opening “Vorspiel” from Wagner’s Parsifal, but without the crescendos to forte and the rests in between phrases. For Parsifal, Michael Sachs, Principal Trumpet of the Cleveland Orchestra, suggests using E♭ trumpet.¹⁷⁴ Likewise, for the solo from Harmonielehre, the player may want to consider E♭ or D trumpet. As long as these instruments provide a tone that is not too harsh or bright, they are viable options.

¹⁷⁴ Sachs, The Orchestral Trumpet, 155.
At certain points in this solo, as shown in Example 5.6, trumpets 2-4 play piano, muted minor chords in various inversions. It is important that the section trumpets stay underneath the soloist. A soft straight mute may facilitate this. In measure 82, when the section trumpets are open, it is essential that they observe the pianissimo dynamics. In mm. 91-93, following the first trumpet solo, the section trumpets play two more minor triads. The first trumpet then inserts a mute and joins the other trumpets for a minor chord in mm. 97-98. Following this, all four trumpets remove their mutes.

After a few sustained notes in the section trumpets, the first trumpet joins the other trumpets in a statement that once again exploits the trumpet’s upper register. Example 5.7 shows this passage, which begins in measure 103.

**Example 5.7: Adams, *Harmonielehre*, Part II, mm. 103-107.**

This short statement is notable not only for its utilization of another D\(^6\), but also because it appears relatively soon after the long and fatiguing first trumpet solo. This passage is yet another example of how Adams’s trumpet music poses challenges in the areas of endurance and high register production.

In measure 111, trumpets 1-3 play another muted chord before the third trumpet begins a rising, pyramiding line in mm. 117-118. In this passage, Adams treats each of
the trumpets as a solo voice. Each player must match pitch as notes are passed from voice to voice (Example 5.8).

**Example 5.8: Adams, *Harmonielehre*, Part II, mm. 117-118.**

Following the passage from mm. 132-143, wherein the trumpets play muted figures among several bars of rest, the first trumpet begins a rising, primarily stepwise line in measure 144. This line is joined by the section trumpets, with the fourth trumpet playing in octaves with the first trumpet. This passage demonstrates how Adams sometimes calls for loud, high register playing in all four trumpets (Example 5.9). This passage pays “homage to Mahler’s last, unfinished symphony.”

The excerpt in Example 5.9 requires B⁵ in unison for all four trumpets, posing challenges in the areas of intonation, blending, and endurance. Adams also treats the four trumpets as independent voices with the downward cascading figure in measure 156. Marked ffff, it is important that the trumpet section does not overplay the unison B⁵ pitches. A resonant, properly blended B⁵ will project better than four blaring B⁵ notes. Playing with bells raised can also help create the perception of a louder dynamic.

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175 Adams, “John Adams | Harmonielehre.”
The rest of the trumpet parts for the second movement of Harmonielehre are fairly straightforward. Following a dissonant, ffff chord that rapidly softens and swells in mm. 163-164, trumpets 1-3 play a soft, muted chord in mm. 173-174. In the last few bars of the movement, mm. 198-202, the four trumpets play unmuted A-minor diads. The first trumpet plays several A⁵ pitches while making a decrescendo. Once again, good control of pitch is needed.

Part III: Meister Eckhardt and Quackie

The trumpets rest for the first 62 measures of Part III: “Meister Eckhardt and Quackie.” During the section between mm. 63-83, trumpets 1-4 play soft soli chords.
Once again, the first trumpet part requires great control of intonation, as there are frequent $A^5$ and $G^5$ pitches in this passage. Later, in mm. 95-105, the trumpets play soft, *legatissimo* chords that slowly descend by step. At this point, the first and fourth trumpets play in octaves while the second and third trumpets fill in the inner voices of the chords.

The next trumpet passage takes place from mm. 143-154. Throughout this passage, the trumpets play sustained chords with the horns. At times, Adams gives the first trumpet or the second trumpet a chance to rest. The first trumpet, for example, does not enter until the third chord, starting on the last half note in measure 147. Next, Adams has the second trumpet drop out for the chord that begins on the second half note of measure 150. This passage shows that even though Adams writes trumpet parts that require great endurance and strength, he still actively considers how to pace the trumpet parts. In doing so, he is able to avoid tiring out the first and second players on non-soloistic passages.

Another instance of independence of parts appears in the next trumpet passage, starting in measure 213. Adams marks the first trumpet part, as well as the third and fourth horn parts, “extremely short” and “not too loud” as they play unmuted, sforzando “bullets” and sustained accented notes throughout this section. Simultaneously, trumpets 2-4 play sporadic, muted sixteenth-note pairs. In measure 248, the section trumpets quickly remove their mutes before continuing their sixteenth-note figures. The first trumpet remains independent of the section trumpets until measure 254. At this point, all four trumpets play the sixteenth-note pairs in rhythmic unison. The first trumpet drops out in measure 260, and trumpets 2-4 continue their rhythmic figure until measure 266.
All four trumpets rest until the passage from mm. 297-326. Throughout this section, all four trumpets play frequent long, sustained chords. Measures 301-308 are repeated, so it is important that the trumpets pace themselves so that they have enough endurance to make it through the end of the piece. Pacing is especially important, as the next trumpet entrance, beginning in measure 333, requires high, solo lines from all four players (Example 5.10).

**Example 5.10: Adams, *Harmonielehre*, Part III, mm. 333-344.**

Throughout this fortissimo passage, the four trumpets play sustained B♭₅ and A♭₅ pitches. Entrances and note changes are staggered, meaning that each trumpet’s note is
effectively a solo. In addition to requiring extensive high-register playing, the music in this passage also poses challenges in regards to blending and intonation. While all four trumpets are playing solo lines, it is important that style and sound are unified across the section.

The frequent unison intervals in Example 5.10 require strong pitch awareness and quick adjustments. After this passage, the first and third trumpets continue in a similar manner until measure 372. Beginning in mm. 345 and 346, Adams has the second and fourth trumpets drop down to play in octaves with the first and third trumpets, respectively. Adams marks *meno forte* for the first (mm. 361) and third trumpets (mm. 362), giving them a chance to pace themselves.

After a few short measures of rest, all four trumpets enter for the final bars of *Harmonielehre*. Throughout this passage, the first and second trumpets are in unison, with the fourth trumpet playing one octave lower and the third trumpet supplying sustained tonic E♭₄ pitches (Example 5.11).

This passage provides another sample of Adams’s proclivity for writing trumpet parts that frequently utilize the upper register and present endurance challenges. At the end of this brass-heavy symphony, the first and second trumpets make unison statements that alternate between B♭₅ and A♭₅. Since this line is doubled, both players should strive to create a blended fortissimo. Playing in this manner will allow the trumpet parts to soar over the orchestra without becoming overbearing. Players may also wish to experiment with bell direction. By raising the trumpet bells up and over the music stand, the first and second players’ line will project more while using slightly less physical effort.
**Example 5.11: Adams, *Harmonielehre*, Part III, mm. 378-393.**

*Harmonielehre* tests performers in the areas of soft lyrical playing, high-register production, short articulations, endurance, section playing, intonation, and rhythmic precision. The extended solo in the second movement requires the first trumpet to play a sustained melody softly in the upper register. In the third movement, the section trumpets encounter many of the same range and endurance challenges found in the first trumpet part.
CHAPTER 6
TROMBA LONTANA AND SHORT RIDE IN A FAST MACHINE

John Adams’s two orchestral fanfares, *Tromba lontana* and *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*, explore the polar opposites of trumpet playing. *Tromba lontana* is a quiet restrained work, while *Short Ride in a Fast Machine* is a loud bombastic showpiece. These two pieces were published together in one score with the title *Two Fanfares for Orchestra*, but Adams did not plan on coupling these two works together.\textsuperscript{176} Regarding the pairing of *Tromba lontana* and *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*, Adams writes: “They are united only in the fact that they are orchestral fanfares, but in fact it is difficult to make work in a satisfying manner in live concert. I myself have never programmed them together.”\textsuperscript{177}

**Tromba lontana**

Adams wrote *Tromba lontana* in 1985 after a commission from the Houston Symphony Orchestra to commemorate the Texas Sesquicentennial.\textsuperscript{178} The premiere performance took place on April 4, 1986, with Sergiu Commissiona leading the Houston Symphony. Written for two solo trumpets and orchestra, *Tromba lontana* translates to “distant trumpet.” Adams specifies that the two soloists are “placed at opposite sides of


\textsuperscript{178} Adams, *Two Fanfares*. 

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the stage.” Adams later suggested that the trumpets could be positioned in “separate 
balconies.”

Regarding Tromba lontana, Adams admits to “taking a subversive point of view 
on the idea of the generic loud, extrovert archetype of the fanfare.” This short piece 
has an atmospheric, tranquil tone that never approaches the exuberance or powerful 
displays associated with most fanfares. Musicologist Michael Steinberg once referred to 
this piece as “a remote cousin to Ives’s The Unanswered Question,” another slow ethereal 
piece that utilizes distant trumpet calls. The two antiphonal solo parts are written for C 
trumpets. Tromba lontana does not call for mutes of any kind. This is the third of four 
Adams pieces that do not require a concert C⁶ pitch or higher in the trumpet parts.

While this piece does not include the typical high register demands that are 
characteristic of most Adams compositions, Tromba lontana still poses some challenges 
in the areas of exposed, sustained soft playing, short and light articulation, and intonation. 
This work is a mere 76 measures long, but mm. 1-2 are the only bars that do not contain 
any trumpet notes. Both trumpet parts provide similar challenges, but in addition to 
slightly more playing, the first trumpet part spans a marginally wider range and has the 
largest intervallic leap in the piece.

Both trumpets, depending on their placement onstage, offstage, or in separate 
balconies, will have to make varying adjustments in the areas of intonation and ensemble 
playing. As the trumpets’ distance from the orchestra or audience increases, the orchestra

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179 Adams, “John Adams | Tromba lontana.”
180 Ibid.
181 Michael Steinberg, Liner notes to John Adams: The Chairman Dances/Two Fanfares/Other 
Works, Edo de Waart, director, San Francisco Symphony, Elektra/Asylum/Nonesuch Records 79144-2, 
or audience will hear the trumpets’ pitch as progressively lower. The trumpets need to be aware of how their pitch is being heard in the hall, and make appropriate adjustments. Also, with added distance, attacks can sound behind the orchestra’s beat. The players must anticipate entrances and attacks as necessary.

A discrepancy exists in regards to the tempo indications in the score for Tromba lontana. At the beginning of the piece, dotted half note = 56 is printed above the trumpets and winds. At the same time, half note = 56 appears above the string parts. With an opening time signature of 4/2, it appears that the correct marking for the whole orchestra is half note = 56. The first recording of this work, made by the San Francisco Symphony in 1987, takes a tempo of half note = 60.

Adams writes that the trumpets “intone gently insistent calls, each marked by a sustained note followed by a soft staccato tattoo.” The first trumpet enters with this motivic idea in measure 3 before outlining D Mixolyidan (Example 6.1). Marked mezzo piano, the first trumpet should enter with a vocal, singing sound. While no crescendo is marked, the player must give forward direction to the sustained notes. A slight vibrato can help, but it is important that the line doesn’t become overly romantic or extroverted. Adams’s description of “gently insistent calls” can help the player create an appropriate mental image for this the following passages. The player may also consider putting a slight lift at the end of the sustained notes. This can keep the long note from bleeding over into the articulated notes if performing in a particularly live hall.

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182 Hickman, 294.
183 de Waart.
184 Adams, “John Adams | Tromba lontana.”
185 Ibid.
Example 6.1: Adams, *Tromba lontana*, mm. 3-20.¹⁸⁶

The articulated notes such as those found in measure 4 are Adams’s “soft staccato tattoo” figures.¹⁸⁷ The player should play these notes lightly, with subtle forward direction leading into each sustained note. Emulating the sound of a stringed instrument’s pizzicato can help the player achieve the proper effect. The trumpet’s location in the hall, as well as the acoustics of the venue, may require more space between notes. If this is the case, “pecky” staccatos should be avoided. The player must strive for a ring to the sound even on the shortest of articulations.

¹⁸⁶ Musical examples from *Tromba lontana: Tromba lontana* by John Adams. © Copyright Hendon Music, Inc. A Boosey & Hawkes company. Copyright for all countries. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission.

¹⁸⁷ Adams, “John Adams | Tromba lontana.”
When Adams has the first trumpet cross wider intervals, such as the downward minor sixth interval in mm. 8 and 10, he places a legato marking on the lower note. The performer should pay careful attention to this marking, making sure not to hit the F♯₄ too heavily. Additionally, the accented D⁵ at the end of measure 13 should be played with stylistic appropriateness. If the accent is too aggressive or pointed, it will ruin the pastoral character of the line.

The second trumpet makes its first entrance in measure 19, overlapping with the tail end of the first trumpet’s line (Example 6.2)

**Example 6.2: Adams, *Tromba lontana*, mm. 19-33.**

While rhythmically and gesturally similar to the first trumpet’s opening statements, the second trumpet’s melodic material utilizes several different modes. The passage begins with the second trumpet playing a statement of the first trumpet’s D-Mixolydian motive in mm. 19-23. The player then moves through D-Dorian (mm. 24-25), and A♭-Lydian (mm. 26-33) statements. All of the considerations regarding articulation, dynamics, and
direction found in mm. 3-20 of the first trumpet part apply to this passage as well. The second trumpet player must be sure to match the articulation and style set by the first trumpet.

The first trumpet reenters in measure 33, overlapping with the sustained E♭⁵ in the second trumpet (Example 6.3). Just as the previous passage began with the second trumpet repeating some material found in the first trumpet part, this next section begins with the first trumpet restating second trumpet material. Even with the louder dynamic, the first trumpet should maintain the articulation style established from the beginning of the piece. As before, the player should avoid overemphasizing the large intervallic leaps.

**Example 6.3: Adams, *Tromba lontana*, mm. 33-44.**

Careful, tasteful attention to the dynamics is essential, as the decrescendo down to piano in measure 42 sets up the loudest point in the piece, which occurs in measure 43. At this point, Adams marks a crescendo up to forte. This must be a vocal, singing moment for the trumpet, with no hint of force or heaviness.
After one beat in which neither trumpet is heard (measure 44), the second trumpet reenters in measure 45 (Example 6.4). This next section features frequent, overlapping statements from both trumpets.

**Example 6.4: Adams, *Tromba lontana*, mm. 45-62.**
Throughout this excerpt, both players must closely follow the dynamic markings, as diminuendos in one trumpet part allow the other trumpet line to come out of the texture. Once again, matching of styles is important throughout this passage, especially in the pyramiding figure in mm. 56-57. The accented G⁵ pitches for both trumpet parts in measure 57, as well as the accented F♯⁵ in measure 59 of the second trumpet part must be played in a stylistically suitable manner. These accents are only marked mezzo forte, so there is no need to use a heavy articulation.

In the final section of the piece, the dense, simultaneous trumpet figures give way to solo trumpet statements reminiscent of the opening section (Example 6.5). The second trumpet plays a full statement that is answered by the first trumpet. The piece ends with a final statement from each of the soloists.

After the second trumpet’s initial statement in Example 6.5, the first trumpet enters with a mezzo-forte phrase that ascends to A⁵, the highest trumpet note in Tromba lontana. Following the A⁵, the player immediately leaps down a minor tenth to an F♯⁴. Large intervals are typical of Adams’s trumpet music, and despite the sudden change in register, the first trumpet must arrive gracefully on the F♯⁴. The final second trumpet statement occurs in mm. 71-74, ending with a sustained F♯⁵. At this point, the orchestra is softly sustaining or arpeggiating D-major chords. Therefore, with F♯ being the third of the chord, it is important to make sure that the pitch does not go sharp while getting softer. The first trumpet’s final statement overlaps with the second trumpet in mm. 73-74, landing on F♯⁵ as well. Measure 74 has two and a half beats of unison F♯⁵ in the solo trumpets, so steadiness of pitch is required. The first trumpet is also playing the third of a D-major chord when it sustains through the fermata in measure 76. Adams marks the
diminuendo in measure 76 down to “niente,” requiring the first trumpet to pace his or her
decrescendo and have great control of tone as the sound fades away.

**Example 6.5: Adams, *Tromba lontana*, mm. 62-76.**

*Tromba lontana* is a subdued and serene orchestral fanfare that does not possess
the characteristic range or endurance challenges found in Adams’s other trumpet music.
However, this piece still tests performers in the areas of articulation, lyrical playing,
dynamic control, blending, and intonation. The pervasive short “tattoos” must be played
cleanly and clearly, all while maintaining a distant quality. Depending on their
placement in the concert hall, the trumpet soloists must make appropriate adjustments regarding intonation, dynamics, and articulation.

**Short Ride in a Fast Machine**

Adams composed his other orchestral fanfare, *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*, in 1986. This piece was a commission for the inaugural concert at the Great Woods Festival in Mansfield, MA. The world premiere took place on June 13, 1986 at Great Woods, with Michael Tilson Thomas conducting the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. *Short Ride in a Fast Machine* is among Adams’s most famous compositions, with the composer David Schiff referring to this work as an “orchestral staple.”

The “short ride” that this work’s title refers to is explained by Adams, who said, “You know how it is when someone asks you to ride in a terrific sports car, and then you wish you hadn’t?” As one would surmise, the piece is full of rhythmic energy. With an incessant woodblock metronome and persistent, syncopated brass fanfares, a convincing performance of this piece requires an unwavering sense of inner pulse from all the musicians.

*Short Ride in a Fast Machine* calls for four trumpets in C. The parts do not require mutes. All four trumpet parts must deal with challenges that are characteristic of Adams’s trumpet music. *Short Ride in a Fast Machine* tests performers in the areas of upper register playing, endurance, unison playing, execution of large intervallic leaps,

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189 Steinberg, Liner notes to *John Adams*. 
and rhythmic precision. Combined, all these challenges make this composition one of the most physically fatiguing pieces in the repertoire. Steve Hendrickson, principal trumpet of National Symphony, has said regarding the performance of *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*, “After five minutes, both your brain and chops are wasted.”\(^\text{190}\) Therefore, performance of this piece should not be taken lightly by any of the four trumpet players.

The first trumpet may consider several different equipment options in order to ease some of the endurance burdens found in *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*. Written for C trumpet, the first trumpet part contains a multitude of repeated A\(^5\) and B\(^♭\)\(^5\) pitches, and ascends up to D\(^♭\)\(^6\) and D\(^6\). Despite long stretches of playing, the first trumpet does not have a note below G\(^5\) until measure 138. Therefore, piccolo trumpet in A or B\(^♭\) is a valid equipment option for this piece. The player can experiment with either piccolo trumpet tuning to see which works best for them. Other small trumpet options, such as trumpets in D or E\(^♭\), can also work well.

The passage from mm. 138-158 poses some challenges when played on piccolo trumpet, as the melodic line descends down to the lowest note of the piece, an A\(^3\) in measure 142. A\(^3\) lies below the range of the piccolo trumpet in B\(^♭\) and, for practical purposes, outside of the useable range of the piccolo trumpet in A. A\(^3\) can be played on a four-valve A piccolo trumpet by extending the fourth slide and using a 1-2-3-4 valve combination, but this requires alternate fingerings for the concert B\(^3\) in measure 140 and concert D\(^4\) pitches in mm. 142 and 147. In the context of *Short Ride in A Fast Machine*, this is likely impractical. The player has a few options, such as switching to trumpet in C for this passage, or leaving the lowest notes out (this passage is played in unison by all four trumpets, so the notes will be covered).

\(^\text{190}\) Hendrickson, 53-54.
The second trumpet part, which does not drop below $D^5$ prior to measure 138, sometimes doubles or takes over the first trumpet line. The second player may also wish to explore other equipment options so as to better match the principal trumpet. If piccolo trumpet in A or B♭ is chosen, the same issues with mm. 138-158 apply.

The first passage for trumpets begins in measure 3 (Example 6.6). The trumpets join the metronomic wood block to play, in Adams’s words, “always extremely short quarters.” Once the trumpets begin playing the one quarter-note and two eighth-note figures in measure 10, the rhythmic complexity increases. With the shifting placement of these figures, it is advised that each player marks in the downbeats in each measure of his or her part. This way, concentration and memory lapses can be avoided.

The excerpt in Example 6.6 begins with the four trumpets playing an open fifth. Changes of pitch, such as when the second trumpet moves down to $E^5$ in measure 5, and when the fourth trumpet lands on $A^4$ in measure 8, are significant. The second and fourth trumpet should treat these as solo moments, and bring out these changes to the harmonic texture while matching the rest of the trumpet section. Likewise, the arrival on a D-major chord in measure 10 is an important moment. The fourth trumpet part may require a little more volume on the $F_\#^4$ in order to balance the upper trumpet notes.

As the eighth-note figures arrive in measure 10, the utilization of double tonguing can help the players maintain a lightness of articulation without dragging. When the ties appear, the trumpet section must not be late off of the long notes. Throughout this section, the trumpets should line up their downbeats with the constant downbeats from the woodblock.
Example 6.6: Adams, *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*, mm. 3-23.\(^{191}\)

In Example 6.7, which starts in measure 24, Adams gives the first trumpet five measures to rest. At this point, trumpets 2-4 take over. The second trumpet should match the intensity and pitch of the first trumpet’s A\(^5\) notes from the previous bar (measure 23).

\(^{191}\) Musical examples from *Short Ride in a Fast Machine: Short Ride in a Fast Machine* by John Adams. © Copyright Hendon Music, Inc. A Boosey & Hawkes company. Copyright for all countries. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission.

Measures 27-28 contain a string of offbeat attacks that sometimes lead to ensemble problems. With a rest on the third beat of measure 27, there can be a tendency to be late with the following offbeat entrances. If this happens, the sforzando notes in measure 28 can feel like downbeats, thus creating rhythmic disunity across the trumpet section and orchestra. The trumpets and horns should focus on lining up the sforzando notes in mm. 27-28 with the simultaneous rim shots played by the snare drummer.

The first trumpet reenters in measure 29 and the second trumpet rests for three measures. This section features repeated staccato quarter notes that quickly taper and swell. The second trumpet enters in measure 32, and soon after, Adams adds sporadic, tutti accents to the unrelenting brass lines. After a crescendo to fff in measure 44, a subito mezzo forte occurs. Swelling triplet figures follow, with a climactic, fortissimo arrival on repeated, syncopated iterations of an E-dominant seventh chord with an added eleventh beginning at the end of measure 47. These chords diminish to forte before another crescendo leads up to the final quarter note of measure 51. Throughout this passage, the trumpet section must pay careful attention to the dynamic markings and accents. Dynamic changes and accents should be overt yet tasteful. Without intervallic
contour on these repeated rhythmic figures, dynamics and accents are what gives these lines shape.

The trumpets’ first extended section of rest begins in measure 52 and lasts for 11 measures. All four trumpets reenter in measure 63 for a section that alternates between asymmetrical and symmetrical meters. The quarter note stays constant as the meters change between 7/4, 3/2, and 4/2 (Example 6.8).

**Example 6.8: Adams, *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*, mm. 63-79. First Trumpet.**

Based on the downbeats played by the wood block, as well as the groupings of eighth notes in the clarinets and synthesizer, the 7/4 bars in mm. 63 and 66 in Example 6.8 can be felt as 2+2+3. The trumpets should bring out the accents in this passage, as each accent marks the shifted rhythmic figures. When triplet figures appear in mm. 71, 76, and 77, the players must play the rhythm precisely, without dragging. Making a
drastic, sudden decrescendo and swell in mm. 78-79 is a good way to add some finality to this passage.

The next section of extended trumpet rests, 21 measures, follows after the excerpt shown in Example 6.8. In measure 81 of the trumpet parts, where the music switches to 6/4, Adams includes two triangles, implying that the dotted half note should get the beat during this passage. The second violins’ and violas’ accents on the first and fourth quarter notes in mm. 81-83 also emphasize dotted half-note groupings. In this 6/4 section, hemiola figures occur throughout the orchestra.

Adams writes above the next trumpet entrance, as he did at the beginning of the piece, “always extremely short quarters” (Example 6.9). In addition to challenges of pacing and endurance, the passage requires subdivision in order for the entire trumpet section to play with rhythmic precision.

In Example 6.9, Adams gives the first trumpet a rest from mm. 121-126, so the other trumpets should make sure to play out during these bars. As in the opening section, the lower-voiced third and fourth trumpets may need to play slightly louder in order to balance the chords. With the arrival of the 3/2 bar in measure 122, the beat returns to the half note for the rest of the piece. The first trumpet returns in measure 127, playing a few measures of syncopated A⁵ notes before rising up to the highest trumpet pitch of the piece, D⁶, in mm. 130-132. The third and fourth trumpets, which concurrently play unison D⁵ pitches, should play strongly and securely so as to support the principal trumpet.

At this point in the piece, the trumpets have five measures of rest before entering with a climactic melody (Example 6.10). Adams writes, “Trumpets should be foremost,” with the four trumpets playing a dramatic, unison solo line.

This is an important moment in the piece, and the trumpets must play with a blended, heroic sound as they navigate the large intervals. It is ideal for the four trumpets to let their unison, matched sounds create the fortissimo dynamic rather than relying on brute force. Aiming the trumpets’ bells upward can also help create the perception of a fortissimo dynamic with slightly less effort.

This melodic line, with all its tenuto markings, should be played broadly. Some conductors or principal trumpet players may prefer a little more “ping” or accent on each note in order to add to the drama of the line. Even with added accents, the line must still have a lyrical quality. Smooth legato articulations can also be used underneath the slurred lines and intervals. As mentioned earlier, if the first or second trumpets are using
piccolo trumpets, this line poses problems in the area of low-register production. Therefore, quickly switching to C trumpet before this entrance is a good option. Since this is a unison line, the first or second trumpets may choose to continue on piccolo trumpet and simply leave out the notes that are too low for their instrument. Whichever strategy the players choose, it is important that the sound stays constant throughout this section. If notes are left out in the upper trumpets, the lower trumpets must make sure to play out on these pitches.

Immediately following this excerpt, the trumpets continue playing a fatiguing, soloistic line. In this passage, beginning in measure 158, Adams scores the four trumpets in a manner similar to the ending of Harmonielehre (Example 6.11). The first and second trumpets double the top line, the fourth trumpet plays the same line an octave lower, and the third trumpet plays sustained notes that provide harmonic support for the other voices.

**Example 6.11: Adams, Short Ride in a Fast Machine, mm. 158-167.**

This example follows several physically fatiguing trumpet passages. It may be necessary to trade off passages between the first and second trumpets. Orchestras such as the Los
Angeles Philharmonic have traded passages in Scriabin’s *Le Poème de l’Extase* before, so this is an acceptable solution to the extremely grueling passages found near the end of *Short Ride in a Fast Machine.*\(^\text{192}\) The first and second trumpets can trade the alternating rising statements in this passage, giving the other player a chance to rest for a few beats. Additionally, if the players switched from a smaller trumpet to trumpet in C for the soli section in 138, trading statements will allow the players a chance to switch back to a smaller trumpet. The choice of what and how to trade is up to the principal trumpet, but possible points for having a different player enter are the unison D\(^5\) in measure 158, the D\(^5\) in measure 160, the D\(^5\) in measure 162, the A\(^5\) in measure 164, and the D\(^5\) in measure 166. The two trumpets can continue trading off in this manner until measure 180. Meanwhile, the fourth trumpet should do its best to play a strong line that will support the top trumpets.

In measure 181, the four trumpets arrive on a D-major chord in first inversion, playing the fanfare like rhythms that were first heard in the beginning of the piece. The lower trumpets must once again make sure that the chord is properly balanced. The fanfare passes through 4/2, 3/4, and 2/2 before a final fff, staccato chord.

*Short Ride in a Fast Machine* tests both the principal and section players in the areas of endurance, range, rhythmic precision, articulation, intonation, and section playing. Careful consideration of equipment choices, as well as strategies of pacing, is necessary to overcome the physical demands of this work. Subdivision and a solid internal pulse are key to executing the shifting rhythmic patterns.

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\(^{192}\) McGregor, vol. 4, 60.
John Adams wrote *The Wound-Dresser*, a cantata for baritone voice and orchestra, in 1988. Commissioned for the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, this piece premiered on February 24, 1989, with the composer conducting. *The Wound-Dresser* takes its name and text from a Walt Whitman poem. This composition deals with the pain and suffering of war as well as, in Adams’s words, “human compassion of the kind that is acted out on a daily basis.”

This work calls for trumpet in C, with the player doubling on piccolo trumpet in C. A straight mute is required for one of the C trumpet sections. The trumpet part for *The Wound-Dresser* contains several characteristics of Adams’s trumpet writing, such as regular utilization of the upper register, complex rhythms, and lyrical solos that demand wide intervallic leaps. The piccolo trumpet solo from mm. 207-230 is also an example of Adams’s tendency to write long trumpet passages that can test a player’s endurance.

The first trumpet entrance occurs in measure 120 (Example 7.1). The trumpet plays a soft, lyrical line that features large intervallic leaps. The downward leap of a major ninth in measure 127, as well as the slurred minor tenth in mm. 127-128, is typical of Adams’s trumpet writing. The melodic line should be played as smoothly as possible. The baritone soloist sings phrases during mm. 124-126 and 128-131 of this excerpt, so the trumpet player must make sure to observe the mezzo-piano dynamics.

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Example 7.1: Adams, *The Wound-Dresser*, mm. 120-135.\(^{195}\)

The wide intervals in Example 7.1 make this passage comparable to the lyrical solo from Mahler’s Symphony No. 5, Movement III, rehearsal number 13. The Mahler excerpt includes an ascending perfect eleventh slur. Rob Roy McGregor suggests that continuous airflow as well as making sure not to rush off the note preceding the large intervallic leap will aid in the execution of the Mahler passage.\(^{196}\) These suggestions also apply to this particular solo from *The Wound-Dresser*.

The next trumpet entrance is muted, and begins with another wide, slurred interval (Example 7.2).


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\(^{195}\) Musical examples from *The Wound-Dresser: The Wound-Dresser* by John Adams. © Copyright 1989 Hendon Music, Inc., A Boosey & Hawkes company. Copyright for all countries. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission.

\(^{196}\) McGregor, vol. 3, 45.
This trumpet line is doubled in the clarinet, so special attention should be paid to intonation and balance. Adams marks the clarinet line with mezzo-forte dynamics, and the trumpet line with mezzo-piano dynamics. The trumpet player should observe these softer dynamics while approaching the line in a vocal manner. Soft straight mutes, such as those made out of fiber, cardboard, plastic, or wood are appropriate options.

For the next trumpet entrance, Adams has the trumpet player switch to piccolo trumpet in C (Example 7.3). He notates the piccolo trumpet part at sounding pitch. Piccolo trumpet in C is not as common as other types of piccolo trumpets, so, if needed, the performer can use a piccolo trumpet in B♭ or A. Transposition and tuning issues make piccolo trumpet in B♭ a better choice than piccolo trumpet in A. The opening line of the excerpt outlines E♭-major, meaning that it is played in F on a piccolo trumpet in B♭. If the passage is played on a piccolo trumpet in A, the line is in G♭, a key that typically requires more intonation adjustments.

The excerpt in Example 7.3 accompanies the baritone soloist’s descriptions of Civil War soldiers’ terrible wounds. After starting with lyric lines that may recall a distant bugler, the trumpet begins, in Sarah Cahill’s words, a “disturbed comment on the text” as the rhythms become restless and irregular. This passage contains a steady, almost mechanical accompaniment throughout. It is important that the trumpet’s rhythmic figures be played with precision, intensity, and musical direction. The accelerando and ritardando in measure 223 are notated solely in the trumpet part, creating

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a rubato effect. As the trumpet player pushes forward to the third beat and then pulls back, the conductor and orchestra keep moving along in the original tempo.


This excerpt can be quite fatiguing, so the player must develop a strategy in order to have the stamina to navigate this passage in a convincing, musical way. The range and endurance challenges within this excerpt are comparable to the solos from pieces such as
J.S. Bach’s *Mass in B Minor* or *Brandenburg Concerto No. 2*. Often performed today on piccolo trumpet, these baroque compositions include long fatiguing passages and ascend to concert E⁶ or higher. The practice techniques that work for these Bach pieces can be adapted in the preparation of *The Wound-Dresser*.

With piccolo trumpet, it is always important to avoid injury through overblowing or over-practicing. As one might practice Bach down the octave on trumpet in B♭ in order to work out the intervals and musical lines, a player could practice this solo in a similar manner. By practicing this passage on trumpet in B♭ down a minor seventh, or on trumpet in C down an octave, players can develop their musical ideas and familiarize themselves with the pitches and rhythmic figures without risking severe fatigue and injury. Players may also experiment with practicing this excerpt on progressively smaller trumpets, starting on trumpet in B♭ and moving towards piccolo trumpet. Rob Roy McGregor writes regarding this type of practicing: “The object is to establish a comfortable relationship with the music first and then increase the difficulty gradually.” When practicing this solo on piccolo trumpet, the player should start with small phrases before working up to a full run-through of the excerpt. The player should also try to emulate the darker tone quality of the large trumpets so as to avoid over-emphasizing the natural shrillness of the piccolo trumpet.

Intonation, especially on piccolo trumpet, can be an issue in this passage. The fast dynamic changes in mm. 207-208 require good control of pitch. The player must make sure to not blow the notes sharp as he or she gets louder. Practicing the opening measures with a drone or a tuner will help the player ensure that pitch is constant.

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As the solo descends into the lower register of the piccolo trumpet in mm. 226-229, the accompaniment becomes denser. Therefore, the player may need to play slightly louder on these lower pitches, particularly between mm. 228-229. As the solo comes to an end, the accompaniment reaches fff before dropping down to pianissimo in measure 230. This coincides with the trumpet’s arrival on a climactic E₆.

The trumpet player switches back to C trumpet for another smooth, lyrical phrase that begins in measure 260 (Example 7.4). Once again, the trumpet line accompanies the baritone soloist.

**Example 7.4: Adams, *The Wound-Dresser*, mm. 260-267.**

This melodic line requires gentle crescendos and decrescendos, giving direction to the line while not covering up the baritone soloist. The peak of the crescendo to forte in measure 266 should be observed exactly so as to line up with the baritone soloist’s crescendo. Throughout this passage, the synthesizer doubles the trumpet line pitch for pitch.

The final trumpet passage of *The Wound-Dresser* begins in measure 308 (Example 7.5). Adams again writes a lyrical trumpet solo that accompanies the baritone singer. As with the previous lyrical passages, the trumpet player must pay close attention to the dynamics and properly pace the crescendos and decrescendos. The trumpet’s first
note, F♯⁵, must be solid, as it has to match the simultaneous F♯³ sung by the baritone. As the passage continues, the trumpet should add vibrato or slight tapers to the repeated F♯⁵ pitches. Otherwise, the line can become musically stagnant. The player should play with a warm sound, and the swells should be smooth and vocal.

Example 7.5: Adams, *The Wound-Dresser*, mm. 308-316.

*The Wound-Dresser* is a challenging piece that contains several exposed lyrical trumpet solos, as well as an extended piccolo trumpet solo. This composition tests the performer in the areas of extreme high register playing, dynamic control, articulation, rhythmic precision, and endurance. The ability to play with a good sound without dominating the baritone singer’s solos is essential. In regards to the piccolo trumpet solo, the player must have a plan for developing or maintaining the stamina necessary to properly play this fatiguing solo in a musically convincing way.
CHAPTER 8

ON THE TRANSMIGRATION OF SOULS

In January 2002, the New York Philharmonic commissioned John Adams to write a piece to memorialize the victims of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. The resulting composition, *On the Transmigration of Souls*, was completed later that year.\textsuperscript{200} The premiere performance took place on September 19, 2002 at the opening concert of the New York Philharmonic’s 2002-03 season. Lorin Maazel conducted the orchestra.\textsuperscript{201} Philip Smith played the offstage trumpet solo.\textsuperscript{202} Written for orchestra, chorus, children’s chorus, and pre-recorded sounds, Adams conceived of this work to be a “memory space.”\textsuperscript{203} Throughout this piece, Adams overlays pre-recorded sounds of the New York City streets, as well as the recordings of victims’ family and friends reciting the deceased’s names, with the orchestral and vocal forces onstage.\textsuperscript{204} Adams won the Pulitzer Prize in 2003 for this composition.\textsuperscript{205}

*On the Transmigration of Souls* utilizes four trumpets in C. Straight mutes are used at certain points in the piece. This composition contains a long, lyrical offstage trumpet solo. In a 2004 interview, Adams said that Charles Ives’s *The Unanswered*

\textsuperscript{200} John Adams, *On the Transmigration of Souls*.


\textsuperscript{202} Maazel.

\textsuperscript{203} Schiff, 191.

\textsuperscript{204} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{205} Adams, “John Adams | Biography.”
Question was a “ghost in the background” of the piece. Regarding the trumpet solo, Adams states: “It alludes to the Ives, but it’s original – [although] it has that minor third at the end, which is the question.” In addition to this long solo, the piece highlights a few other characteristic features of Adams’s trumpet writing: slurs of large intervals, independence of parts, and long sections of loud playing.

The first trumpet enters in measure 43 (Example 8.1). In the score, Adams adds the note: “Solo Trumpet: Preferably in the Balcony Behind the Audience.”

Example 8.1: Adams, On the Transmigration of Souls, mm. 43-66.

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206 Colvard, 198.

207 Ibid.

208 Musical examples from On the Transmigration of Souls: On the Transmigration of Souls by John Adams. © Copyright by Hendon Music, Inc., A Boosey & Hawkes company. Copyright for all countries. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission.
This excerpt presents challenges in the areas of lyrical playing, large intervallic leaps, rhythmic precision, endurance, pacing, musicality, and, of course, offstage playing. The frequent major sevenths, as well as the falling minor thirds, refer to the trumpet calls from Ives’s *The Unanswered Question*. As in Ives’s work, this trumpet solo projects a calm, searching quality. The player should avoid over-romanticizing the melody and instead play the line simply, with musical direction through the sustained notes. The soloist can add to the reflective nature of this melody by using gentle vibrato, slight crescendos, or slight diminuendos. The climax of the passage (mm. 56-58) should soar above the orchestra with grace rather than force.

From a rhythmic standpoint, the player must be precise, but not to the point of musical rigidity. The interplay between triplet and duple figures should be smooth and natural, helping the line to flow forward. Subdivision is essential throughout this passage. The player’s distance from the ensemble may also require him or her to anticipate the beat so as not to fall behind the orchestra.

As with any offstage solo, issues can arise in the areas of intonation and dynamics. The offstage trumpet’s location can effect how the audience perceives the player’s pitch. Since pitch lowers with distance, the player may have to adjust and tune a little sharper.\(^{209}\) The marked dynamic levels of the solo are what the audience should hear. The soloist may need to play the solo slightly louder in order to create the proper dynamic balance. If this is the case, the player must be sure to maintain the lyrical, contemplative character of the melody at a higher dynamic level.

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\(^{209}\) Sachs, *The Orchestral Trumpet*, xiii.
After the solo ends in measure 66, the first trumpet returns to the orchestra. The next trumpet entrance occurs in measure 193, during which time the brass play staggered, pulsating sustained notes (Example 8.2).

**Example 8.2: Adams, *On the Transmigration of Souls*, mm. 193-212.**

This passage poses challenges in the areas of dynamic control, intonation, and blending. Sound quality, as well as pitch, must remain constant as the notes swell and diminish. The lower trumpets should be sure to play solidly and securely so as to support the first and second trumpets. This passage can be tiring as it ascends up to B♭₅ in mm. 208 and 212 of the trumpet parts, so proper pacing and efficient sound production is necessary. This passage, with its stretches of loud, sustained high notes, is characteristic of Adams’s trumpet music.
After a large section of rest, the trumpets return in measure 327 with a passage that includes some pyramiding among the four parts (Example 8.3). Near the end of the passage, Adams’s use of large intervals, as well as his exploitation of the trumpet’s upper register, is on display once more.

In this excerpt, Adams has each of the four trumpets move independently of the other players at least once. During the pyramiding that occurs in mm. 334-335, the third and fourth trumpets must play confidently. In measure 340, the second trumpet should match the first trumpet’s D\textsuperscript{5} and continue playing it strongly so as to support the first trumpet’s octave slur up to D\textsuperscript{6}.

The trumpets next enter in measure 354. Beginning with unison sustained E\textsuperscript{4} pitches, the trumpets gradually break off into independent parts with overlapping entrances. As before, each of the four trumpets should bring out these solo notes. In measure 372, Adams marks “solo” in the first trumpet part as it begins a long, sustained rising line. Upon the first trumpet’s arrival on A\textsuperscript{5} in measure 381, all the trumpets, horns, and the first trombone make a crescendo to fff going into bar 382.

Following four bars of rest, the third and fourth trumpets insert straight mutes and play loud, tenuto quarter notes every other beat starting in measure 387. The third and fourth trumpets should play these notes strongly to match the fortissimo quarter-note statements in the children’s choir. The two trumpets continue similarly through measure 397. The first and second trumpets reenter in measure 397 as the third and fourth trumpets drop out (Example 8.4). Muted, the first and second trumpet play in octaves, making a crescendo with each statement of a two-note motive. After a few more bars of rest, all four trumpets play together.

Despite the frequent rests in Example 8.4, the volume and range of this passage requires proper pacing and efficient sound production from the first trumpet player. Forte dynamics should not be played too loudly so that the player has some room to make an effective crescendo.
The performer’s choice of mute can help with the execution of this passage. The principal trumpet should use a loud, metal straight mute that allows him or her to play very loudly without any distortion of pitch. A metal mute like the one a player might use for the opening of Respighi’s *Pini di Roma* would be appropriate.

The trumpets then rest for two measures before playing without mutes in measure 418 (Example 8.5).
Example 8.5 is the final trumpet passage of the piece, and once again, the first trumpet plays repeatedly in the upper register. As with the previous excerpt (Example 8.4), this passage requires great stamina in order to be played with a full and resonant sound throughout. Adams pairs the first and third trumpets as well as the second and fourth trumpets in octaves in mm. 423 and 428-433. The lower voices should be aware of when these octave doublings occur and provide proper support for the first or second trumpet. When the first trumpet drops out in measure 432, the second trumpet should take over and lead the swells in measures 432 and 434.

*On the Transmigration of Souls* is a powerful work that includes a long lyrical offstage trumpet solo that tests the performer in the areas of wide leaps, musicality, and endurance. This solo requires close attention to phrasing and dynamic pacing, as well as the ability to maintain a consistent tone through various large intervallic slurs. This work also features long sections of loud playing and passages marked by independence of the trumpet parts.
Adams’s next composition after *On the Transmigration of Souls* was another work inspired by Charles Ives: *My Father Knew Charles Ives*. Completed in 2003, *My Father Knew Charles* resulted from a commission by the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra. Michael Tilson Thomas led the world premiere on April 20, 2003.\(^\text{210}\) Glenn Fischthal played the extended trumpet solos in the first and third movements.\(^\text{211}\) This work is, in Adams’s words, “a piece of musical autobiography.”\(^\text{212}\) While Adams’s father never actually met or interacted with Charles Ives, Adams says that “there was so much about the symmetries between me and my father and Charles and George Ives [Charles’s father] that it seemed a reasonable assumption, given the right time and place, that the two men would have become good friends.”\(^\text{213}\)

*My Father Knew Charles Ives* has three movements: “Concord,” “The Lake,” and “The Mountain.” This work shares a kinship with Ives’s *Three Places in New England*, and Adams has joked that an alternate title for *My Father Knew Charles Ives* could be “*Three Places in New England, Only a Little Further North.*”\(^\text{214}\) The composer calls


\(^{212}\) Adams, *Hallelujah Junction*, 229.

\(^{213}\) Ibid.

Movement I, “Concord,” the “most Ivesian” of the three movements.\textsuperscript{215} It includes a long trumpet solo that is reminiscent of Ives’s *The Unanswered Question*, raucous parade music that is interrupted by a bugle call, and references to Ives’s “Nearer My God to Thee.”\textsuperscript{216}

Movement II of *My Father Knew Charles Ives* is entitled “The Lake.” This movement recreates the atmosphere of a 1935 evening on Lake Winnipesaukee in New Hampshire, where Adams’s parents first met. The brass occasionally play muted jazz figures that evoke a scene from the dance hall on the lake.\textsuperscript{217} The final movement, “The Mountain,” begins with another trumpet solo that suggests the music of Ives.

In this composition, Adams calls for four trumpets in C, with the fourth trumpet doubling on trumpet in B♭. Both straight and Harmon mutes are needed for this work. *My Father Knew Charles Ives* includes two long, lyrical solos that challenge the player’s endurance, flexibility, and musicality. Similar to the offstage solo from *On the Transmigration of Souls*, the trumpet solos from this piece include slurred, wide intervals. Throughout this piece, there are several moments of linear independence in the trumpets.

**Movement I: Concord**

The first trumpet enters with an exposed, *cantabile* solo in measure 9 (Example 9.1). Lasting for 50 bars with only a few beats of rest in the passage, this solo requires the player to pace the phrases properly so that vocal, calm tone can be played throughout.


\textsuperscript{217} Steinberg, “My Father Knew Charles Ives,” 208.
Example 9.1: Adams, *My Father Knew Charles Ives*, movement I, mm. 9-58.218

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218 Musical examples from *My Father Knew Charles Ives: My Father Knew Charles Ives* by John Adams. © Copyright 2003 by Hendon Music, Inc., A Boosey & Hawkes company. Copyright for all countries. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission.
In this solo, Adams never marks the trumpet part above mezzo forte. The soloist must be able to maintain a warm sound throughout the softer dynamics. A slight vibrato can be used, but, as with the solo in *On the Transmigration of Souls*, the line should never become extroverted. The rhythm, which often includes triplet subdivisions, must not disrupt the natural flow of the melodic line.

This passage contains the wide intervals typical of Adams’s trumpet music. The slurred intervallic leaps, especially the slurred major ninth in mm. 23-24, must be smooth and have a vocal quality. McGregor recommends a “constant air stream and full time value given to all notes” for the large slurred interval passage in the third movement of Mahler’s Symphony No. 5.\(^{219}\) This advice can also be applied to the solo found in Example 9.1. A practice technique that can help the execution of this solo is audibly singing or buzzing the melody on the mouthpiece. Adolph “Bud” Herseth, former Principal Trumpet of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, taught this approach because it “forces [one] to solidly fix the desired pitches and intervals in [one’s] ear.”\(^{220}\)

The stamina and endurance challenges for this solo are similar to those surrounding the offstage posthorn solo from Mahler’s Symphony No. 3. While the Adams solo has more rests than the posthorn solo, the sheer length of the excerpt requires a sustained focus and musical intensity throughout. In both works, practicing a few phrases at a time in order to develop a musical approach can be more efficient than plowing through the whole solo again and again.

\(^{219}\) McGregor, vol. 3, 44.

\(^{220}\) Timothy J. Kent, *Within the Sphere of the Master: My Recollections as a Student and Long Time Colleague of Adolph Herseth, Trumpeter Supreme of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra* (Ossineke, MI: Silver Fox Enterprises, 2006), 216.
In mm. 45-49, the trumpet’s melodic line is doubled at a softer dynamic level by the first violins. In these measures, the soloist should pay close attention to pitch and observe the mezzo-piano dynamics, even as the line ascends to C\(^6\). As the trumpet is finishing its solo, the first flute doubles the C\(^5\) and D\(^5\) in mm. 55-58.

Following this trumpet solo, the first and second trumpet enter in measure 111, playing soft unison E\(_b\)\(^4\) pitches as the trombones play forte parade music. After a section of rest starting in measure 125, the first and second trumpets reenter with straight mutes to play a staccato melody with the piccolos (Example 9.2).

**Example 9.2: Adams, *My Father Knew Charles Ives*, movement I, mm. 137-152.**

Adams’s trumpet music often requires short articulate lines, such as the passage in Example 9.2. This excerpt requires matching of note lengths between both trumpets as well as the piccolos. The staccatos must be short, but resonant. In order keep consistent dynamics throughout, the G\(^3\) pitches in mm. 148 and 152 may require a little more volume or a clearer articulation. In the measures that follow this excerpt, the trumpets
continue playing this melody, adding a few sforzando G⁵ notes as the line comes to an end in measure 167.

As the Ivesian parade music continues, the first and second trumpets play rising and falling scalar figures as the third and fourth trumpets punctuate the line with sforzando eighth notes between mm. 170 and 177. Starting in measure 181, all four trumpets play sforzando “bullets,” leading into a passage that has the trumpets playing the parade music again. The parade music begins in measure 191, and requires good ensemble playing in the lower register of all four trumpets (Example 9.3). At the end of the passage, the first trumpet interrupts with a bugle call that evokes the cacophonous spirit of Ives’s music.

Throughout the first 19 measures of Example 9.3, Adams has the four trumpets alternate between unison, octave, and triadic voicing. Each player should be aware of how he or she fits into the overall texture. This excerpt demands secure, resonant playing in the low register. The reveille-like bugle call in measure 210 of the first trumpet is also marked fortissimo, and the player should bring out this interjecting line in true Ivesian fashion. Playing with the bell slightly raised above the stand will help the player create this desired effect. After the excerpt in Example 9.3, the trumpets continue for a few bars, playing staccato repeated sixteenth-note rhythms that lead to fortissimo offbeat chords in mm. 223-227.
Trumpets 1-3 play a series of sforzando “bullets” with straight mutes in mm. 241-254 and mm. 265-277. During these passages, the fourth trumpet has plenty of time to switch to B♭ trumpet for an entrance with the other trumpets in measure 298 (Example 9.4).


Adams switches the fourth trumpet to trumpet in B♭ so that the player can produce concert E³ and play in octaves with the first and second trumpets. Since it can be challenging to switch to a new trumpet and immediately play forte in this register, it is important to practice this particular instrument change. After this passage, the four trumpets utilize flutter-tonguing as they play fortissimo chords until measure 317. The fourth trumpet then switches back to trumpet in C for the rest of the piece.
Movement II: The Lake

“The Lake” begins with an extended oboe solo before the four trumpets enter in measure 53 (Example 9.5). The trumpets and trombones play distant jazz harmonies. Adams writes a note in the score that indicates that the players should use Harmon mutes with no stems.

Example 9.5: Adams, My Father Knew Charles Ives, movement II, mm. 53-64.

Throughout this passage, the trumpet section must maintain balance as it swells through each chord. At the same time, the swells should always maintain a lontano character.
Due to the limitations of Harmon mutes, the lower trumpets may have to play slightly louder so that their pitches can be heard. After two bars of rest, the trumpets and trombones return with a lyrical line (Example 9.6).

**Example 9.6: Adams, *My Father Knew Charles Ives*, movement II, mm. 67-74.**

As before, the trumpets should maintain a distant sound. With this short melodic figure, all four trumpets should play their lines in a lyrical manner. Additionally, the players must match legato articulations. After this section, Adams has the trumpets rest for a few bars before trumpets 1-3 reenter to play gently swelling and receding triads from mm. 95-102. A final statement by the trumpets and trombones occurs in mm. 124-126.

**Movement III: The Mountain**

“The Mountain” begins with a long, slow trumpet solo that is reminiscent of the solo from the first movement. Once again, the characteristic wide leaps of Adams’s trumpet writing are present in this solo (Example 9.7). The chimes intone a G on the offbeat of beat two in measure 1, thus setting up the first trumpet’s G⁵ in measure 2.

As with the solo in the first movement, this line should be played in a vocal, fluid style with gentle vibrato and tasteful swells. The wide leaps must be smooth, and the same processes and practice techniques that work for the first movement solo work for this one as well. The rhythms must be solid but not stiff, always moving ahead. The first trumpet solo ends in measure 21 with a decrescendo through B⁵ that should be tapered with finesse and beauty. When the second trumpet player enters in measure 22, he or she must match the first trumpet’s sound and dynamic level. Similarly, in mm. 24-26, the second
and third trumpets must blend with each other as well as with the horns on the unison downward line.

The next trumpet entrance occurs in measure 31 (Example 9.8), where the third and fourth trumpets begin a section of pyramiding in the four trumpet parts. This passage is an example of the independence of parts that is typical of Adams’s trumpet writing. Near the end of the excerpt, Adams has the first trumpet rise up to a C♯₆, once again displaying his characteristic utilization of the trumpet’s upper register.

From mm. 34-38 in Example 9.8, every single trumpet entrance is a solo and should be treated as such. Constant subdivision by each trumpet player will ensure that entrances line up properly. Players should pay careful attention to the staggered dynamic levels. For example, the second and fourth trumpets make a crescendo to fortissimo on the downbeat of measure 40, while the first and third trumpets do not reach a fortissimo dynamic until measure 41. By accurately following Adams’s dynamic markings, the trumpets can realize his intended sonic effect.

The trumpets reenter with a passage from mm. 54-61 that contains swelling chords. Adams has the first trumpet ascend to C⁶, again showing his characteristic exploitation of the trumpet’s upper register. After a small section of rests, trumpets 1-3 return with chords in measure 74 (Example 9.9). For this passage, Adams writes a note in the score stating that he regards these crescendos as, “a gentle, expressive swell on each note” and warns the player, “do not exaggerate.”

This is a soli passage for the trumpet section, so the players should closely follow Adams’s direction in order to create pulsating figures that drive the music forward. The trumpets continue in this manner until measure 80, at which point the second and fourth trumpets pair up to play independently of the first and third trumpets. A few bars later, the third and fourth trumpets play a falling figure that diverges from the upper trumpet parts (Example 9.10).

In measure 89 of Example 9.10, the first trumpet passes its line to the third trumpet. The third player must make sure to match the principal’s intensity and take the lead as the line descends. Once again, each trumpet player must observe his or her own specific dynamics in mm. 91-97. After this excerpt, the trumpets play a few more intensifying lines and chords until measure 103.
The next trumpet passage takes place in measure 114, where the four trumpets play galloping triplet figures. The trumpets then rest for a few bars before the third and fourth trumpets begin another section of staggered, muted pitches in measure 126. In measure 143, Adams writes a passage in which the four trumpets have offset entrances on A\(^4\). At the end of this passage, the first trumpet slurs up to a fortissimo C\(^6\) (Example 9.11).

As each trumpet enters with its own A\(^4\) in Example 9.11, the pitch must remain solid through the crescendo. The first trumpet’s slur up to the C\(^6\) is truly a solo, as there is no other movement in the orchestra on beat two of measure 148. The performer should not overplay the octave slur, as there are three bars of crescendo up to triple forte following the arrival on C\(^6\). This crescendo must be paced properly so that the player can execute the fff dynamic in measure 152 with a full, resonant sound. This passage, which takes place near the end of this challenging piece, can create endurance issues. Herseth taught that “air flow is the key to endurance,” so efficient use of air should be one element of a player’s approach to navigating these passages.\(^{221}\)

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\(^{221}\) Kent, 220.

After a large section of rests, the trumpets begin their final passage of the piece in measure 239. The trumpets utilize straight mutes throughout this section, playing staccatissimo triplet and duple eighth-note rhythms. The passage ends with the four trumpets playing *fff* triplets in measure 257. Once again, Adams demands much of the first trumpet, as he writes repeated $B_b^5$ pitches in the last few measures of this section.
*My Father Knew Charles Ives* is a challenging work that has two solos in the first and third movements that are similar in style to the extended lyrical solo from *On the Transmigration of Souls*. These solos require large intervallic leaps, properly paced dynamics and phrasing, and stamina. This piece also tests performers in the areas of short articulations, intonation, and section playing.
CHAPTER 10

DOCTOR ATOMIC SYMPHONY

In 2007, following a commission by the Carnegie Hall Corporation, the Saint Louis Symphony, and BBC Radio 3, John Adams composed *Doctor Atomic Symphony*. The premiere performance took place on August 21, 2007 at Royal Albert Hall, with the composer conducting the BBC Symphony Orchestra. *Doctor Atomic Symphony* is an orchestral adaptation, or a “reworking of materials” found in Adams’s 2005 opera, *Doctor Atomic.* Adams states that *Doctor Atomic Symphony* “includes music from the opera’s overture, the Act II ‘panic’ music, the ‘military matters’ sections from Act I,” and “culminates with an orchestral setting of Oppenheimer’s signature ‘Batter My Heart’ aria that closes Act I.”

*Doctor Atomic* draws from contemporary accounts, physics texts, and poetry to portray the anxiety and the adulation surrounding the buildup to the first successful atomic bomb test. Set in 1945 at the Trinity test site in Alamagordo, New Mexico, its characters include men and women who were associated, either directly or indirectly, with the Manhattan Project. Physicist Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer is the main character. *Doctor Atomic Symphony* is a continuous, orchestral piece without voices that utilizes portions of the opera, frequently giving the singers’ lines to solo instruments.

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222 John Adams, *Doctor Atomic Symphony*.


Although the Saint Louis recording of *Doctor Atomic Symphony* lists three movements, “The Laboratory,” “Panic,” and “Trinity,” these titles do not appear in the score.\(^{226}\)

As discussed in Chapter 4, Adams scored *Doctor Atomic* for three trumpets in C, with the first trumpet doubling on piccolo trumpet in B\(^\flat\). For *Doctor Atomic Symphony*, Adams expands and alters this scoring, calling for four trumpets in C, with the fourth trumpet doubling on piccolo trumpet in B\(^\flat\). Straight mutes are required for some of the C trumpet and piccolo trumpet passages. Several sections of the *Doctor Atomic Symphony* trumpet parts contain exactly the same material as the opera’s trumpet parts.

*Doctor Atomic Symphony* begins with music from the Prologue of Act I of the opera. Trumpets 1-3, as well as the horns and trombones, play fortissimo, dissonant chords that, according to Adams, recall the music of Varèse.\(^{227}\) Starting in measure 13, the first trumpet plays a quickly swelling and receding A\(^5\) in unison with the clarinets, requiring close attention to pitch, as A\(^5\) is typically a sharp note on C trumpet. Intonation adjustments may be necessary in mm.17-20, where the first and second trumpets play unison G\(^5\) pitches that also rapidly swell. In measure 21, the first trumpet plays a solo, staccato fanfare (Example 10.1).

In this excerpt, the short, articulate playing typical of Adams’s trumpet music is on display. The first trumpet should play the sixteenth notes precisely. Forward direction is needed, but the player should be careful not to rush. This passage also contains large intervallic leaps.

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Example 10.1: Adams, *Doctor Atomic Symphony*, mm. 21–29.\(^{228}\)

An example of Adams’s independence of parts is also present in Example 10.1. In mm. 26 and 28–29, the second trumpet plays solo notes in response to the first trumpet’s line. Throughout the unison and independent sections of this excerpt, the second trumpet must match the first trumpet’s articulation and volume. Rhythmic precision is required of both players.

After a short section of rest, all four trumpets enter with mutes in measure 40. This is the first time that the trumpets diverge from the original trumpet scoring found in the opera. At this point, the trumpets and trombones play the chorus’s initial statement of Act I of *Doctor Atomic*. Slight variations in rhythm exist between the symphonic and operatic versions. Example 10.2 shows this trumpet passage, which covers the soprano and alto parts of the opera’s chorus.

\(^{228}\) Musical examples from *Doctor Atomic Symphony: Doctor Atomic Symphony* by John Adams. © Copyright 2007 Hendon Music, Inc., A Boosey & Hawkes company. Copyright for all countries. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission.
Throughout this section, the trumpets and trombones should emulate a vocal, singing sound. A soft straight mute, perhaps one made of cardboard, fiber, plastic, or wood, would be appropriate for this passage. The players should all match legato articulations, as well as pace the crescendos and decrescendos together. After three bars of rest, the trumpets and trombones restate this melody, with small rhythmic alterations, from mm. 48-52.

The trumpets all rest until measure 66, where Adams presents music from “Countdown Part I,” Act II, Scene 3 of the opera. In the opera, the second and third trumpets play sforzando “bullets” during this section. In *Doctor Atomic Symphony*, the scoring is altered (Example 10.3). The first and second trumpets use straight mutes and enter with fortissimo lines that present the chorus’s soprano and alto lines from the opera. The third and fourth trumpets cover the “bullets” that were originally given to trumpets 2 and 3. Adams’s characteristic independence of parts is visible throughout this section.

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Example 10.3: Adams, *Doctor Atomic Symphony*, mm. 66-86.
From the start of Example 10.3, the first and second trumpets must match their unison G\(^5\) pitches with one another, as well as with the woodwinds. The second trumpet should closely observe the accents so that the E\(^5\) pitches pop out of the texture. The long, sustained notes in both parts must always have forward momentum and energy. The third and fourth trumpets must play short and precisely, matching length and style with the trombones.

Starting in measure 72, the third trumpet part corresponds with the original first trumpet part of the opera.\(^{230}\) Marked forte, the third player should bring out the solo sixteenth-note figures. Constant subdivision is necessary in order to ensure that all of these figures are placed properly. All four trumpets should use straight mutes that do not hinder extremely loud, articulate playing. The same mutes one might use for the opening of Respighi’s *Pini di Roma* or the beginning of Richard Strauss’s *Don Quixote* would work for this passage.

After a few measures of rest, the first trumpet enters on B\(^5\) and plays a descending line in octaves with the horns and trombones from mm. 98-108. This trumpet passage is not in the opera, as this line is actually sung by the sopranos and altos.\(^{231}\) The first trumpet reenters in measure 131 with solo sixteenth-note figures that are similar to those found in the third trumpet part in mm. 75-79. The trumpet parts in mm. 131-139 are identical to their operatic counterparts (Example 10.4).\(^{232}\) Following the first trumpet’s solo sixteenth-note statements, the first and second trumpets pass material back and forth.

\(^{230}\) Adams, *Doctor Atomic*, 413-414.

\(^{231}\) Ibid., 416-417.

\(^{232}\) Ibid., 418-419.
Example 10.4 demonstrates two of the characteristic elements of Adams’s trumpet writing: passages that require great finger dexterity, and independence of parts. With a tempo of quarter note = 144, the frequent 1-2-3 and 1-3 valve combinations, combined with an octatonic scalar pattern, will require some slow, careful practicing. The second trumpet player must match the volume and energy of the first trumpet. Both trumpets’ entrances must be precise so that the composite line remains unbroken.

**Example 10.4: Adams, *Doctor Atomic Symphony*, mm. 131-139.**

In the next section, mm. 141-156, trumpets 1-3 play fortissimo sustained chords with the rest of the brass. This portion of the *Doctor Atomic Symphony* trumpet parts matches the opera exactly.\(^{233}\) These chords should be played powerfully and resonantly.

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\(^{233}\) Adams, *Doctor Atomic*, 419-422.
Later, trumpets 1-3 use straight mutes and play chords marked with a crescendo (mm. 190-191). This short trumpet figure is unique to the *Doctor Atomic Symphony*.

The next trumpet entrance takes place in measure 216. This passage also diverges from its corresponding spot in the opera. Here, the second trumpet, along with the horns, plays Robert Oppenheimer’s baritone vocal line. The first trumpet interjects with a jagged line that Adams marks as “*stuttering, irregular*.” This first trumpet solo is found in both the symphony and opera, however the *Doctor Atomic Symphony* version leaves out one of the disjunct statements and instead has the first trumpet play the Oppenheimer melody in octaves with the second trumpet from mm. 233-234 (Example 10.5).

This passage includes some examples of the characteristic independence of parts and challenging rhythmic figures found in Adams’s music. The second trumpet solo should be strong and resonant, emulating the voice of an operatic baritone singer. The player must be sure to bring intensity to the line as well. The second trumpet should defer to the first trumpet’s choice of mute so that the octave sections are blended properly. In the first trumpet part, the staccato notes should be biting in order to contribute to the “stuttering” effect of the line. This line will require subdivision, and the player must be careful not to rush on the quintuplet figures. The principal player should also pace the line so that the ascent to C⁶ in measure 237 is energetic and exciting.

When the third, fourth, and later, second trumpets enter with their fortissimo notes in mm. 238 and 239, the players should play very solidly and confidently. In the opera, Adams writes the same pitches in these two corresponding bars. The scoring however, is slightly altered, with trumpets 2 and 3 entering first, followed by the principal trumpet a
In *Doctor Atomic Symphony*, Adams rests the first trumpet in these bars to prepare for an upcoming lyrical solo.

**Example 10.5: Adams, *Doctor Atomic Symphony*, mm. 216-240.**

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Starting in measure 242, trumpets 2-4 start playing accompanying staccato chords on the second beat of every measure. In the opera, these notes are played by trumpets 1-3 as they accompany Kitty Oppenheimer’s soprano line. In the *Doctor Atomic Symphony*, this line is given to the first trumpet (Example 10.6). It features wide intervallic leaps such as minor sevenths, minor tenths, and major ninths. This solo also has some complex rhythmic figures.

**Example 10.6: Adams, *Doctor Atomic Symphony*, mm. 243-265.**

Example 10.6: Adams, *Doctor Atomic Symphony*, mm. 243-265.

Despite the wide leaps and challenging rhythms in this passage, the performer must play a line that is fluid and smooth. Emulating the perceived “ease” through which a soprano would sing this line can help the trumpet player in his or her approach to this passage.

Practicing the 4:3 figures at a slow tempo with a metronome beating sixteenth notes can help solidify the rhythm so that this figures can be “felt” properly when played at the marked tempo. In regards to the large intervallic slurs, the same processes and practice techniques that work for the solos from *On the Transmigration of Souls* and *My

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Father Knew Charles Ives work for this solo from Doctor Atomic Symphony. These methods include McGregor’s recommendation of good air support and proper note duration, as well as Herseth’s suggestion of singing and mouthpiece practice.\textsuperscript{236}

For its 2011 principal trumpet audition, the Saint Louis Symphony created an audition list that required mm. 228-265 of the first trumpet part of Doctor Atomic Symphony. This passage is included in Examples 10.5 and 10.6. These passages should be closely studied, as they demand that the player can play with rhythmic stability in contrasting articulate and lyrical styles.

After the first trumpet solo ends, the section trumpets sound a few bars of sforzando chords before the second and third trumpets play soft, gently swelling chords. The second trumpet should take the lead as it plays a short, falling line with the third trumpet. Ending in measure 280, these second and third trumpet lines were originally played by the first and second trumpets in the opera.\textsuperscript{237}

The next trumpet passage is from mm. 295-308. In this section, trumpets 1-3 play the same accompanimental figure that trumpets 2-4 played during the first trumpet’s lyrical solo. This passage is identical to its counterpart in the opera, where the trumpets accompany the character Pasqualita’s mezzo-soprano melody. In Doctor Atomic Symphony, the trumpets accompany a tuba solo.

In mm. 320-336, trumpets 1-3 play a passage of soft, sustained chords that swell. This passage is followed by another trumpet passage from mm. 345-350. Featuring staggered entrances, this passage is another example of Adams’s characteristic

\textsuperscript{236} McGregor, vol. 3, 44.; Kent, 216.

\textsuperscript{237} Adams, Doctor Atomic, 435-436.
independence of parts. The trumpet parts in both of these passages are unchanged from the opera. ²³⁸

In measure 361, trumpets 1-3 reenter, playing short, sforzando note clusters at sporadic intervals through measure 371. In measure 373, Adams alters the scoring from the opera (Example 10.7). The sforzando accompanimental notes that were originally in the opera’s first and second trumpets are given to the third and fourth trumpets in Doctor Atomic Symphony. At the same time, the first and second trumpets now play a unison melody that was sung by Robert Oppenheimer in the opera. ²³⁹ Eventually, the first trumpet plays this line as a solo, while the second trumpet joins the third and fourth trumpets in fortissimo chords that were originally played by trumpets 1-3 in the opera.

As the first and second trumpets begin the passage in example 10.7, both players should strive for a blended, lyrical forte. When the first trumpet solo begins in measure 381, the player should be sure to continue with a powerful, yet singing sound. The staccato G⁵ notes must be short yet resonant, so as to properly lead into the F♯⁵ pitches. As the statements become softer, the orchestral accompaniment becomes sparser. Careful pacing of the softening dynamic levels will ensure that the final diminishing F⁴ is a beautiful moment for the soloist.

²³⁸ Adams, Doctor Atomic, 441-446.
²³⁹ Ibid., 450-452.
In the next section the horn plays an extended solo. The second trumpet enters in measure 408, playing accompanying sustained C⁵ pitches underneath the melody. As the horn solo comes to an end, the third trumpet has several staggered entrances with the second trumpet (mm. 413-421). In measure 424, the first and second trumpets have
staggered entrances on their sustained notes. All of these accompanimental figures in mm. 408-442 of the trumpet parts appear to be unique to *Doctor Atomic Symphony*.

The second, third, and fourth trumpets reenter in measure 451 with a sforzando “bullet” that was originally played by trumpets 1-3 in the opera.²⁴⁰ In the next measure, the fourth trumpet drops out to switch to muted piccolo trumpet, while the second and third trumpets crescendo on a sustained D⁵. This pitch was originally in the first and second trumpets in the opera, but Adams changes the scoring here so that the first trumpet can easily enter with a solo line in bar 453 (Example 10.8). The character of General Groves sang this solo line in *Doctor Atomic*.²⁴¹ Even though General Groves is sung by a bass voice, Adams chooses to score the line in the upper register of the trumpet. Additionally, he has the fourth player, now on piccolo trumpet in B♭, continue the solo up to a concert E♭⁶. This passage, with its extreme high-register playing, is characteristically Adams.

When the fourth trumpet player enters on piccolo trumpet, he or she must be mindful of intonation. Piccolo trumpets typically have sharp tendencies, but at this point in the piece, the instrument has not been used yet. Therefore, it may be cold, and possibly a bit flat. The fourth trumpet should tune carefully beforehand, and if pitch is consistently an issue because the horn is cold from being unused, the player has a few options. In order to keep the horn warm, the fourth trumpet can quietly blow air through the horn during the long stretches of rest preceding the entrance.

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²⁴⁰ Adams, *Doctor Atomic*, 231.

²⁴¹ Ibid.
Example 10.8: Adams, *Doctor Atomic Symphony*, mm. 453-463.

A second option, if the first trumpet agrees to it, is to have the fourth player double the first trumpet melody starting in measure 453, as it is cued in the fourth part. This will give the fourth trumpet player a few bars to get used to pitch, but it also requires a very quick change from C trumpet to piccolo trumpet in the span of three beats. Whether or not these options are utilized, the player should practice going back and forth between C trumpet and piccolo trumpet, as this will make the player more comfortable with these quick changes.²⁴²

The fourth player should also avoid overblowing the piccolo trumpet, and instead strive to blend with the first trumpet’s sound. When the fourth trumpet makes a

²⁴² Kent, 230.
crescendo up to concert E♭, it should be approached as a natural continuation of the line, rather than a shrill outburst. With this passage, the principal trumpet may wish to play the complete composite line alone, either on C trumpet or piccolo trumpet. On the other hand, if the principal trumpet wants to use this passage as a chance to rest, the fourth trumpet could play the whole line.

After a single, sforzando pitch-cluster in trumpets 1-3 in measure 470, the first trumpet begins another muted solo in measure 478 (Example 10.9). This melody is not in the opera’s trumpet part, but is instead sung by Captain Nolan, a tenor. This solo requires short, clear articulations as well as solid rhythm. The player must not rush on the repeated eighth notes. The quick swells and diminuendos on single notes, such as in measures 480 and 484, should not be allowed to effect pitch.

Example 10.9: Adams, Doctor Atomic Symphony, mm. 478-487.

After this solo, the second, third, and fourth trumpets play a fortissimo chord that was originally scored for trumpets 1-3 in the opera. By this time, the fourth trumpet

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243 Adams, Doctor Atomic, 233.

244 Ibid., 234.
has switched back to C trumpet to play the bottom of the chord, an A₄. After this single note, the fourth trumpet switches back to piccolo trumpet for the rest of the piece.

All four trumpets have an extended section of rest until measure 543. With the arrival of a section marked “Animato,” the second and third trumpets begin pulsating triplet figures that Adams originally gave to the first and second trumpets near the end of Act I of the opera (Example 10.10).²⁴⁵

Example 10.10: Adams, *Doctor Atomic Symphony*, mm. 543-544.

These triplets must be played lightly, with both players creating huge contrasts between the different dynamic levels. Similar figures return every few bars, taking on a galloping character before a final crescendo up to fff in measure 569. A solid pulse and rhythm are key throughout.

After the arrival of a sparsely orchestrated section marked “Solennemente” in measure 572, the first trumpet enters with a lyrical solo in measure 583 (Example 10.11). In *Doctor Atomic*, this solo was originally Robert Oppenheimer’s baritone aria, “Batter My Heart.”²⁴⁶ This D-minor aria is a climactic moment in both the opera and *Doctor Atomic Symphony*. Using a text from John Donne, this aria gives insight into Oppenheimer’s torn conscience as he tries to come to grips with both the triumph and grave danger that surrounds the development the atomic bomb.

²⁴⁵ Adams, *Doctor Atomic*, 270.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 275.
Example 10.11: Adams, Doctor Atomic Symphony, mm. 583-594.

This solo challenges the performer by presenting wide intervallic leaps that must be played in a smooth, lyrical fashion. Sachs suggests that the first trumpet should “strive for a vocal color in [his or her] tone when playing this excerpt.”\textsuperscript{247} Listening to baritone singers’ recordings of this aria can also give the player a good model to emulate. Sachs also points out that a familiarity with Donne’s poem, also entitled “Batter My Heart,” can help the player in developing a finessed musical approach.\textsuperscript{248} Example 10.12 includes the opening bars of the baritone aria from Doctor Atomic.

\textsuperscript{247} Sachs, The Orchestral Trumpet, 2.

\textsuperscript{248} Ibid.
While there are slight rhythmic differences between the trumpet and baritone version of “Batter My Heart,” the most striking difference is that Adams does not include accents in the baritone part. In the trumpet version (Example 10.11), there are frequent accents added to downbeats. Accents in this section should not be heavy or pointed. Instead, they should add a slight weight to the note, as one might accent the word “batter” when speaking. Additionally, the player must avoid compressing the sixteenth-note rhythms.

249 Musical examples from Doctor Atomic: Doctor Atomic by John Adams. © Copyright Hendon Music, Inc. A Boosey & Hawkes company. Copyright for all countries. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission.
as this will upset the flow of the line. If anything, a slight lengthening of the downbeat sixteenth notes is appropriate.

From mm. 596-603, the second and third trumpets reenter as part of a short orchestral interlude. In a style similar to the section from mm. 543-569, this “Animato” passage is highlighted by swelling, repeated sixteenth-note rhythms. This passage was originally scored for the first and second trumpets in the opera.\(^{250}\) The trumpet aria picks up again in measure 608 (Example 10.13). This passage is nearly twice as long as the previous trumpet solo. The player should be aware of pacing, both physically and musically.

This passage in Example 10.13 requires close observation of the dynamic markings. The forte entrance should be vocal and full, similar to how one might approach the offstage trumpet solo from Respighi’s *Pini di Roma*. When the mezzo-forte dynamic arrives in measure 618, the sound should still be resonant, but with a more reserved approach. The large intervallic leaps, as in the first aria passage, should be smooth and vocal. Careful attention paid to the placement of the crescendo peaks will ensure that these wider intervals are not over-emphasized. In mm. 621-629, the woodwinds double the trumpet melody. The pitch and rhythm must be stable, especially in these closing bars of the passage.

\(^{250}\) Adams, *Doctor Atomic*, 277-278.

As the trumpet rests for 19 measures, the woodwinds take up the aria melody.

The trumpet returns in measure 649, playing another soaring line (Example 10.14).


As before, the large intervals should not disrupt the flow of the phrase. Every thirty-second note and triplet sixteenth note must be present and heard clearly. After this phrase, the trumpet rests for seven bars while the woodwinds continue the aria material.
The final, climactic trumpet solo begins in measure 662 (Example 10.15). This passage coincides with the end of Act I of *Doctor Atomic*, and should be treated as a special, dramatic moment.

**Example 10.15: Adams, Doctor Atomic Symphony, mm. 662-669.**

The opening mezzo forte should have a covered, mysterious quality as the soloist plays flowing sixteenth notes. From mm. 664-669, the woodwinds once again double the trumpet’s melody. The D⁵ in measure 667, which was originally an A for the baritone singer, should have growing intensity as it smoothly leads into the G⁵ in bar 668.²⁵¹

The Saint Louis Symphony’s 2011 principal trumpet audition list also included the entire aria section of *Doctor Atomic Symphony*. These solos test a player’s lyricism, tone, rhythm, flexibility, dynamic control, and stamina. Therefore, the whole “Batter My Heart” section from *Doctor Atomic Symphony* should be closely studied and thoughtfully practiced.

The “Animato” section returns after the trumpet solo in measure 673. In the opera, this was originally scored for trumpets 1-3, with the first player on piccolo trumpet in B♭. In *Doctor Atomic Symphony*, the composer switches the scoring. Now, trumpets 2-4, with the fourth player on piccolo trumpet in B♭, play this passage. The three

trumpets play articulate, repeated eighth-note and sixteenth-note rhythms before a
crescendo to fff in bar 684. Throughout these bars, the fourth trumpet doubles repetitions
of concert F⁵ pitches with the second player.

In the final passage of *Doctor Atomic Symphony*, trumpets 2-4 play a
staccatissimo rhythmic figure that is independent of the rest of the orchestra’s rhythmic
material (Example 10.16). Adams’s reason behind scoring for piccolo trumpet for this
passage is made clear once the fourth player begins playing several iterations of concert
D⁶. Throughout this passage, trumpets 2-4 should bring out their figures in order to
contrast with the surrounding rhythmic activity. The second and third trumpets can
support the fourth trumpet by playing secure, centered D⁵ pitches. Likewise, the fourth
trumpet should make sure that his or her concert D⁶ notes are not sharp or too shrill.
Subdivision is necessary in this passage, as each 3/4 bar is felt in one.
Example 10.16: Adams, *Doctor Atomic Symphony*, mm. 691-704.

*Doctor Atomic Symphony* contains a variety of challenges for all four trumpet players. This piece tests players in the areas of range, endurance, short articulation, lyrical playing, rhythmic precision, dynamic control, intonation, and section playing. Independence of parts is present as well. The trumpet aria that ends the piece is an especially beautiful moment for the first trumpet, and requires the player to play with a vocal sound as he or she spans wide intervallic leaps. Professional and aspiring trumpet
players should study this piece, as it tests the performer’s proficiency in a variety of
lyrical and articulate styles. Familiarizing oneself with this work would be good
preparation for future orchestral trumpet auditions, as it is possible that excerpts from
*Doctor Atomic Symphony* could appear on additional required repertoire lists.
CHAPTER 11

CITY NOIR

John Adams composed *City Noir* in 2009 after a commission from the Los Angeles Philharmonic Association, the London Symphony Orchestra, and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. The premiere performance took place on October 8, 2009, with Gustavo Dudamel leading the Los Angeles Philharmonic.\(^{252}\) Donald Green performed the long trumpet solo in the third movement.\(^{253}\) *City Noir* is essentially a three-movement symphony that paints a picture of Los Angeles in the “late nineteen-forties and nineteen-fifties.”\(^ {254}\) Influences or evocations of the film noir genre can be heard throughout this piece. Additionally, Adams has said that his interest in “jazz-inflected symphonic music,” as pioneered by composers such as Milhaud and Gershwin, guided his conception of this work.

The first movement, “The City and Its Double,” is an energetic fast movement that depicts the bustling city as “a source of inexhaustible sensual experience.”\(^ {255}\) Adams descriptively refers to the short, sforzando brass notes that appear throughout this work as “bullets.” Movement II, “The Song is For You,” starts slowly with lyrical, jazz-inspired solos in the alto saxophone and trombone. The music eventually speeds up, creating a “brief passage of violent, centripetal energy” before returning to the opening texture, now


\(^{253}\) Gustavo Dudamel, Brian Large, Bernhard Fleischer, John Adams, and Gustav Mahler, *The Inaugural Concert* (Hamburg: Deutsche Grammophon, 2009), DVD.

\(^{254}\) Adams, “John Adams | City Noir.”

\(^{255}\) Ibid.
with solos in the horn and viola. Adams calls the final movement, “Boulevard Night,” a “study in cinematic colors.” This movement contains an extended lyrical trumpet solo in the style of the trumpet melody from the film Chinatown. After one of the many virtuoso saxophone solos in this piece, the movement explodes into a chaotic and powerful final section that, according to Adams, creates the impression of a “crowded boulevard peopled with strange characters.”

*City Noir* calls for four trumpets in C. Straight mutes, as well as Harmon mutes with no stems, are specified at certain points in this piece. The first trumpet part is physically demanding, so the principal trumpet may wish to use an assistant. The Los Angeles Philharmonic utilized an assistant for the premiere performance. Important features include the long, lyrical trumpet solo in Movement III, frequent utilization of the upper register, challenging rhythms, wide intervallic leaps, passages that require great finger dexterity, demanding section playing, and independence of parts. The co-existence and combination of these characteristics place this piece among Adams’s most challenging works to perform. Christopher Still, current member of the Los Angeles Philharmonic’s trumpet section, has said of *City Noir*: “I think it is the hardest piece of music I’ve ever had to play.”

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256 Adams, “John Adams | City Noir.”

257 Ibid.

258 Ibid.

259 Dudamel.

Movement I: The City and its Double

The first movement begins with a passage of sforzando “bullets” in the trumpets and trombones. Adams marks the staccatissimo chords in measure 2, “extremely short.”\(^{261}\) In this opening section, these “bullets” appear every few measures, punctuating scalar runs in the strings. The passage continues on in this manner, with a few sustained brass chords interspersed, until measure 27.

The trumpets then rest while the woodwinds, including the E♭ alto saxophone, play a long passage of overlapping scalar runs. All four trumpets reenter with Harmon mutes (no stem) in measure 88, playing gently cascading lines that accompany the woodwind figures. Throughout this passage, there are several instances in which the different trumpet parts have staggered entrances or moving notes that are independent of the other players. Each player should make sure to bring out his or her moving notes, while still remaining underneath the woodwind lines. The texture of trumpet pyramiding and linear independence continues until measure 125.

After a short rest, the first and second trumpets switch to straight mutes and begin a swelling, rising line in unison in measure 130. The third and fourth trumpets reenter with straight mutes in measure 136. At this point, trumpets 1-4 begin a short passage of sforzando syncopated figures. The trumpets then rest from mm. 146-155. The next trumpet entrance occurs in measure 156, where the second and fourth trumpets start a pyramiding figure that eventually outlines a C-minor seventh chord. As the passage continues, the first trumpet encounters D\(^6\) three times. Adams’s characteristic frequent use of the trumpet’s high register is on display in this passage (Example 11.1). This passage, while physically daunting for the first trumpet, also demands a lot from the

\(^{261}\) Adams, *City Noir*. 
entire section (not shown in Example 11.1). The second trumpet, for example, must play unison upper register lines with the principal in mm. 171-174. The fourth trumpet also has some challenging low register playing during this passage.


![Musical Example]

As with any potentially fatiguing passage, the first trumpet player should adopt an intelligent and efficient approach to the preparation of this excerpt. Practicing a passage such as this down the octave and then methodically working back up to written pitch is one way to build up stamina while getting a feel for the pacing and musical shaping of the line.  

Practicing the passage at a soft dynamic can also help the player gain the efficiency and tonal focus that is required to play this passage at fortissimo.

The trumpets rest for 30 measures before returning in measure 215 to play muted accompanimental lines underneath the woodwinds and strings. The trumpets rest again

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262 Musical examples from *City Noir: City Noir* by John Adams. © Copyright Hendon Music, Inc., A Boosey & Hawkes company. Copyright for all countries. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission.

263 Kent, 226.
from mm. 223-231. In mm. 232-242, muted trombones play short soft chords that are quickly responded to in kind by trumpets 1-3. In mm. 266-269, the first trombone, first and second horns, upper woodwinds, and first trumpet have a similar figure, this time as solo sforzando notes (Example 11.2).

**Example 11.2: Adams, *City Noir*, movement I, mm. 266-269. First Trumpet and First Trombone.**

The first trumpet’s notes, which are played with the upper woodwinds, should be played very shortly and very loudly, almost bouncing off of the first trombone’s notes. The player should make sure to use a mute that will allow him or her to play the sforzandos without much resistance. While this passage may appear very simple on the page, it is texturally important that these measures are solidly executed.

Following a short, muted rising figure for trumpets 1-3 in mm. 298-301, trumpets 2-4 reenter in measure 306. Adams has second, third, and fourth trumpets, as well as the trombones, play soft repeated B-major chords from mm. 306-311. In these measures, the second trumpet is the top voice, playing $F_{\#}^5$ pitches. The next two trumpet passages, found in mm. 334-346 and mm. 374-378, include syncopated, muted accompanimental figures in all four trumpets. Adams’s sforzando “bullets” return in mm. 379-397 of the trumpet parts, this time with more rhythmic activity than before.
Following another “bullet” chord in 415, the first and second trumpets play a quick, slurred figure with the woodwinds starting in measure 417. Next, the sforzando chords return before a long section of extremely articulate playing that requires great flexibility and rhythmic stability from trumpets 1-4. The first trumpet part for this passage is particularly challenging (Example 11.3).

**Example 11.3: Adams, *City Noir*, movement I, mm. 417-440. First Trumpet.**

The syncopated and offbeat rhythms in this excerpt require slow practice and subdivision.

It is important that the line always has forward momentum. Double tonguing, if not too
heavy, can help the performer play this line in a crisp, clear manner. Once again, proper pacing is key to playing this fatiguing line in a convincing way.

The four trumpets next return in measure 449 to play an exciting soli line that draws “The City and its Double” to a close (Example 11.4). Beginning in unison, the trumpets play a rising arpeggio that cuts through the orchestra.

Example 11.4: Adams, *City Noir*, movement I-II, m. 449 (mvmt I) – m. 2 (mvmt 2).

In this excerpt, Adams has the second player double the principal’s C⁶ and C♯⁶. In doing so, *City Noir* joins *Naive and Sentimental Music* and *The Dharma at Big Sur* as one of the three pieces in his oeuvre that contain a C♯⁶ in the second trumpet part. In addition to range and wide intervallic challenges, this passage requires excellent blending and intonation from all four trumpets. The trumpets must make sure to not overplay this
passage, as a blended, resonant sound from the whole trumpet section will carry better than an aggressive, forced fff. The diminuendo at the end of passage carries into Movement II, where the trumpet section must carefully pace the taper.

**Movement II: The Song is for You**

In the beginning section of Movement II of *City Noir*, the trumpets’ function is mostly accompanimental. Following the trumpets’ decrescendo into measure 2 of “The Song is for You,” the trumpets play a passage of chords with Harmon mutes in mm. 13-14 and 17-19. The trumpets then switch to straight mutes for sforzando “bullets” in mm. 29 and 32. After a gently swelling, unmuted chord in mm. 39-40 in trumpets 1-4, the second and first trumpets have staggered entrances on sustained notes in mm. 42 and 43, respectively. Adams then has the second and third trumpets play a muted, descending figure with second and third trombones from mm. 47-49.

The next trumpet passage in *City Noir* demonstrates some more of Adams’s characteristic independence of parts (Example 11.5). Together with the woodwinds, Adams has trumpets 1-4 play soft, slowly cascading lines underneath a horn solo. In these measures, each trumpet player should bring out his or her moving notes. The rhythm should be played precisely, as the first trumpet is doubled in the piccolo and first flute, the second trumpet is doubled in the second flute, the third trumpet is doubled in the oboe, and the fourth trumpet is doubled in the first clarinet. If a trumpet player does not change notes at the appropriate time, it will make the texture unclear.
Example 11.5: Adams, *City Noir*, movement II, mm. 54-60.

The trumpets, again with Harmon mutes, next enter in measure 69 to play soft chords that accompany a trombone solo. In mm. 80-81, while the section trumpets are still using Harmon mutes, the first trumpet switches to straight mute to play a solo, descending G♯-minor arpeggio in response to the solo trombone’s line. From mm. 82-95, the trumpets rest as the trombone solo continues. The four trumpets reenter with straight mutes in measure 96, playing short and soft rhythmic figures under the trombone melody.
While soft, these figures are reminiscent of the articulated material from mm. 424-435 of Movement I (Example 11.3).

As the trombone solo comes to a close, the tempo steadily increases. Starting in measure 109, Adams has the first and second trumpets play fast, loud figures with the saxophone (Example 11.6). This passage is an example of Adams’s typical trumpet writing that challenges the player’s flexibility, finger dexterity, and rhythmic precision.

**Example 11.6: Adams, *City Noir*, movement II, mm. 109-124.**

The trumpets must match the saxophone, as the trumpets are merely filling in portions of the whole saxophone line. This section also includes some instances of linear independence. The passing of the melodic material back and forth between the two trumpets from mm. 119-124 requires rhythmic accuracy. Large intervals, such as the major ninths in mm. 114-116, are also hallmarks of Adams’s trumpet style. These wide leaps, as well as the falling figures in mm. 119-123, require great agility from both players. Slow practicing, singing, and mouthpiece buzzing can help players gain the
accuracy and clarity needed throughout this line. The players should also make sure to watch the conductor so that the accelerando going into measure 115 is in sync with the rest of the orchestra.

In order to make some of the slurs more manageable or clear, the players may experiment with alternate fingerings. For example, a player could use the third valve for either C♯⁵ (D♭⁵) or A⁴ in mm. 120-122. By using the third valve for one of these notes instead of the typical 1-2 valve combination for both, the player can avoid the tendency to rush through these lip slurs. In mm. 127-129, the four trumpets play a unison eighth-note line that helps propel the tempo ahead during another accelerando. As with the previous passage, the trumpets must watch the conductor very closely. This unison line reappears in mm. 133-136, now in a steady tempo. Example 11.7 shows the passage that begins in measure 140, the third and final iteration of this figure.

Example 11.7: Adams, *City Noir*, movement II, mm. 140-146.

In these measures, the four trumpets must match articulation, note lengths, and pitch. The eighth note of the 5/8 measures becomes the quintuplet eighth note of the 2/2 measures, so there should be a seamless transition between mm. 142-143. This line should have a powerful yet unforced quality. After this dramatic section, the music comes to a halt. The section that follows is much slower and softer, with the viola and
clarinets playing solos. The trumpets insert straight mutes for the last passage of the
movement, which includes mezzo-forte staccato chords in mm. 162 and 169.

**Movement III: Boulevard Night**

“Boulevard Night” begins with a quiet, slowly pulsating texture. Over an
atmospheric accompaniment dotted by irregular vibraphone rhythms, harp arpeggios, and
chords in the piano, the first trumpet enters with a lyrical solo in measure 29. Adams has
referred to this as a “Chinatown” trumpet solo, and it is most certainly evocative of the
trumpet melody from Jerry Goldsmith’s main title music from the 1974 film.\(^{264}\) Despite
the similarity in color and tone, the City Noir solo bears the stamp of Adams’s
characteristic trumpet style (Example 11.8). This solo may not use the upper extremes of
the trumpet’s range, but it does contain rhythmic challenges, wide intervallic slurs, and
passages that require great finger dexterity and flexibility.

This is an expressive melody, and the soloist should play with a dark, vocal sound
as he or she plays this line in an unhurried fashion. Adams refers to this solo as
“moody.”\(^{265}\) A warm, relaxed vibrato adds the appropriate character to this passage. As
with other Adams lyrical solos, the intricate rhythms should be accurate yet never stiff.
In performances, a slight rubato in spots where the trumpet is totally alone (such as the
pickup to measure 35, the sixteenth notes in measure 36, the first beat of measure 37, and
the pickup to measure 38) can be musically effective. The line should be fluid, especially
when the player encounters the rising quintuples in mm. 42-43.

\(^{264}\)“Chinatown (1974) – Full Cast and Crew,” Internet Movie Database Website,

\(^{265}\) Adams, “John Adams | City Noir.”
Example 11.8: Adams, *City Noir*, movement III, mm. 29-54.
Similar to the way one might approach the fast scalar figures from the first trumpet part of Strauss’s *Don Juan*, the scalar passages of this *City Noir* solo should be practiced slowly and repeatedly to the point of memorization. Once these lines are secure, the player can add subtle rubato. Slow, accurate practice of the wide intervallic leaps is also important.

In addition to pacing the musical material throughout the course of the solo, the player should consider endurance issues. This passage spans 26 measures in a slow tempo, with only a few quarter-note or eighth-note rests dispersed throughout. When preparing this solo, performers must develop strategies that will allow them to maintain their sound and energy from beginning to end. Because this solo has many opportunities to display tone, phrasing, stamina, and virtuosity, the Los Angeles Philharmonic included it on the orchestra’s 2011 principal trumpet audition repertoire list.

After a section of rest, a passage featuring pyramiding in the trumpet parts begins in measure 79 (Example 11.9). Within this section, Adams once again has the second trumpet double a C♯₆ with the first trumpet. This passage demands solid unison playing from all the section members. When Adams pyramids the trumpets in mm. 84-87, each player should play out on their solo notes. For example, the fourth trumpet should play a strong, centered A³ in order to lay the foundation for the other trumpets’ entrances

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266 Smith, track 8.
Example 11.9: Adams, *City Noir*, movement III, mm. 79-87.

. In mm. 89-93, the “bullets” return in the trumpets, starting a section that Adams refers to as “jerky stop-start coughing engine music.” From mm. 99-137, the trumpets play sporadic “bullets” that punctuate the strings’ Stravinskyesque mechanical figures. Throughout most of the section, this accelerating texture accompanies a virtuoso solo in the alto saxophone.

The next trumpet passage takes place from mm. 144-146, where the four trumpets play fortissimo staccatissimo eighth-note figures over dotted quarter notes in the rest of the brass. In mm. 153-154, Adams marks the chords in the horns and trumpets (with straight mutes) as fff and “crude.” Playing with bells up, as well as using metal straight mutes that create a lot of buzz, will achieve this effect.

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267 Adams, “John Adams | City Noir.”
Starting in measure 158, Adams writes a line for all four trumpets that alternates between G⁴ and D⁵ pitches (Example 11.10). Adams has the first and second trumpets play sustained notes, while the third and fourth trumpets play short eighth notes. Each pair of trumpets should closely follow their articulation markings. The third and fourth trumpets’ short notes help give a little more emphasis to the front of each of the first and second trumpet’s sustained notes. A similar passage occurs in mm.166-174.

**Example 11.10: Adams, *City Noir*, movement III, mm. 158-163.**

Trumpets 1-3 later reenter to play a few short offbeat chords in mm. 186-188. After a section of rest, these three trumpets return to play a disjunct, rhythmically energetic passage with the trombones in mm. 213-217. Starting in measure 222, all four trumpets then play a passage of swelling chords that lasts until 229. In measure 233, just as in the climactic passage near the end of *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*, all four trumpets play a unison line that cuts through the orchestra (Example 11.11). This melody is doubled in the alto saxophone, and contains technical challenges. This section demands that all four players have good flexibility, strong finger technique, and solid rhythm. It
tests the individual player’s virtuosity while also testing the trumpet section’s ability to match sound, pitch, and style. The players must guard against rushing through the sixteenth notes and sixteenth-note triplets.

**Example 11.11: Adams, *City Noir*, movement III, mm. 233-247.**

![Musical notation image]

The opening arpeggios in Example 11.11 should be played powerfully, with all four trumpets blending carefully. As the rapid sixteenth-note lines become more complex, the intensity level cannot become overbearing. Some elements of Adams’s
characteristic independence of parts appear starting in measure 240. When trumpets 1-2 pass material back and forth with trumpets 3-4, all the entrances must line up precisely so as to match the alto saxophone’s continuous line. This section of the piece is rather fast, so the trills in mm. 243 and 247 should be short and quick so that the players do not fall behind.

After this passage, the first and second trumpets drop out briefly as trumpets 3-4 play quick chordal statements with the trombones in measure 248. The second trumpet and first trumpet join in on these chords in mm. 249 and 251 respectively. Following a quick rising figure in mm. 253-255 for trumpets 1-3, Adams has the four trumpets play a 5/8 passage that has the first trumpet rise up to D♭6 (Example 11.12). These lines are also found in the winds and horns.

**Example 11.12: Adams, *City Noir*, movement III, mm. 257-261.**

![Example 11.12: Adams, *City Noir*, movement III, mm. 257-261.](image)

The whole trumpet section should observe the initial forte dynamic so that the first player is not forced to play too loudly on the crescendo. This is especially important from an endurance standpoint, as there are several more sections of loud, upper register playing ahead.

In the next trumpet passage, found in mm. 266-281, the four trumpets play “bullets” again. In the last few measures of this section, the trumpets switch to sustained,
quickly swelling quarter notes. In mm. 289-291, Adams writes a fortissimo passage for the trumpets, horns, and trombones that resembles the section from mm 257-261 (Example 11.12). Filled with rising and falling figures, this is the first of three such statements in the brass. As before, Adams has the first trumpet ascend to D♭

Trumpets 1-3 drop out after this fortissimo phrase. The fourth trumpet continues on, playing a sustained, fortissimo G³ as part of an E♭-major chord with the low brass from mm. 292-294. In mm. 302-304, the brass, including the four trumpets, play a second fortissimo passage, a slight alteration of the phrase from mm. 289-291. Once again, Adams has the first trumpet play D♭. At the end of the phrase, the fourth trumpet plays another sustained G³ with the low brass in mm. 305-307. All four trumpets play a passage of swelling, sustained chords with the horns in the section from mm. 308-316.

In measure 317 (example 11.13), the brass play the third and final statement of the rising and falling figures.

**Example 11.13: Adams, *City Noir*, movement I, mm. 317-321.**
Even if an assistant is used, it is important that the first player plays with what Sachs refers to as “relaxed power.” In order to make it through all of these loud, demanding passages, the player must “move a lot of air” and “sing out without pushing or constricting the sound.” Efficient playing, combined with strategic pacing (or the use of an assistant), is essential to ensure that the player can overcome City Noir’s endurance challenges.

After this passage, Adams gives the first trumpet a little bit of a break. In mm. 323-327, trumpets 2-4 play swelling chords. The first trumpet then joins the section trumpets for the closing passage of the piece, which provides one final test of the principal player’s stamina. This section, found in mm. 329-340, requires the first trumpet to play repeated ascending slurs from B♭⁵ to C⁶. Each C⁶, marked fff, must smoothly soar out above the texture. The trumpet parts, as well as City Noir, come to an end with a final, quick crescendo on a G-minor chord.

City Noir places great demands on both the principal and section players. In addition to a long, jazz-inspired trumpet solo in the third movement, this piece provides challenges in the areas of high-register playing, endurance, finger dexterity, short articulation, rhythmic precision, intonation, and section playing. The lyrical trumpet solo requires great flexibility, musical imagination, and dynamic pacing. Professional and aspiring trumpet players should study this solo, as it may appear on additional audition repertoire lists in the future.

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268 Sachs, The Orchestral Trumpet, 112.

269 Ibid.
CHAPTER 12
CONCLUSION

Over the last 35 years, John Coolidge Adams has become one of the leading composers of contemporary classical music. Many of his compositions are now part of the standard orchestral repertoire, with a few of his works appearing on required lists for principal trumpet auditions for the Saint Louis Symphony and the Los Angeles Philharmonic. The trumpet parts found in Adams’s orchestral and operatic music provide a variety of challenges and tests for trumpet players.

After providing an overview of Adams’s trumpet music, it is clear that there are several important characteristics of his style of trumpet writing. The first of these is his frequent exploitation of the trumpet’s upper register. As of 2013, all but four of his 31 original trumpet-utilizing compositions require a concert C\#\textsuperscript{6} or higher in at least one of the trumpet parts. Pieces such as *Harmonium*, *The Dharma at Big Sur*, *Doctor Atomic*, *A Flowering Tree*, and *City Noir* contain several passages that require the player to play at or above concert C\#\textsuperscript{6}.

Related to Adams’s regular use of the trumpet’s higher register, the second characteristic of his trumpet music is the inclusion of long passages that challenge a player’s endurance. His second-period works, which are primarily minimalist, include several extended sections of loud repeated rhythmic figures that sit above the staff. *Harmonium*, *Harmonielehre*, and *Short Ride in a Fast Machine* are some pieces that test the player’s stamina and strength in this manner. Adams also tends to write extended
solo trumpet passages, as seen in Harmonielehre, The Wound-Dresser, On the Transmigration of Souls, My Father Knew Charles Ives, Doctor Atomic Symphony, and City Noir. These solos require careful attention to both musical and physical pacing.

The third feature of Adams’s trumpet music is rhythmic complexity. His music frequently contains syncopated figures, asymmetrical meters, and shifts between duple, triplet, and quintuplet rhythms. Harmonielehre, Short Ride on a Fast Machine, On The Transmigration of Souls, My Father Knew Charles Ives, Son of Chamber Symphony, City Noir, and The Gospel According to the Other Mary are a few works that contain challenging sections that require constant subdivision and a solid internal pulse.

The fourth characteristic of Adams’s trumpet music is the regular requirement of extremely short articulations. Harmonielehre, Short Ride in a Fast Machine, El Dorado, Chamber Symphony, Slonimsky’s Earbox, Doctor Atomic, A Flowering Tree, Doctor Atomic Symphony, and City Noir are just a few of the works that contain passages of staccatissimo playing. Short sforzando notes, which Adams refers to as “bullets,” appear regularly in almost all of his works.

Wide intervallic leaps are a fifth characteristic of Adams’s trumpet parts. His music often has the trumpet slur or articulate large intervals in quick succession. Intervals between a minor seventh and an augmented eleventh are commonly encountered in his trumpet music. Harmonium, Nixon in China, Violin Concerto, On The Transmigration of Souls, My Father Knew Charles Ives, A Flowering Tree, Doctor Atomic Symphony, Son of Chamber Symphony, and The Gospel According to the Other Mary are some works in which the trumpet player’s flexibility is on display.
The sixth characteristic of Adams’s trumpet parts is the presence of passages that require great finger dexterity and agility. This is especially true of his third and fourth-period compositions, which make regular use of contrapuntal lines. The Death of Klinghoffer, Chamber Symphony, Scratchband, Slonimsky’s Earbox, Doctor Atomic, Doctor Atomic Symphony, Son of Chamber Symphony, and City Noir are examples of works that require excellent finger technique as the player navigates challenging scalar figures.

Adams’s common use of swells and sudden dynamic shifts is a seventh characteristic of his trumpet writing. His music frequently demands that the trumpet player has great control of sound and pitch through rapid dynamic changes. Grand Pianola Music, Harmonielehre, Chamber Symphony, On the Transmigration of Souls, My Father Knew Charles Ives, Doctor Atomic, and City Noir are a few of his pieces that have sections that challenge the player’s ability to make sudden dynamic shifts and maintain sound at extreme loud and soft dynamics.

Independence of parts is the eighth characteristic of Adams’s trumpet music. His music regularly includes section trumpet parts that have interesting, important, or contrasting material. While large solos are typically found in the first trumpet parts, Adams still gives some solo material to the other trumpets. Works such as Harmonium, Nixon in China, On the Transmigration of Souls, My Father Knew Charles Ives, Doctor Atomic, Doctor Atomic Symphony, City Noir, and Absolute Jest have passages in which section trumpets play solos or enter independently of the principal player.

The ninth and final characteristic of Adams’s trumpet writing is presence of passages that are challenging in regards to section and ensemble playing. Related closely

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270 Sanchez-Behar, 1.
to part independence, Adams’s trumpet music typically includes passages of chord pyramiding, staggered entrances, and the passing back and forth of material between various members of the trumpet section. The composer also writes demanding lines that require high-register unison playing. *Harmonium, Harmonielehre, Short Ride in a Fast Machine, Naive and Sentimental Music, Doctor Atomic, A Flowering Tree, Doctor Atomic Symphony,* and *City Noir* are just some of the Adams pieces that challenge the trumpet section’s ability to play together rhythmically while matching pitch and style.

This study conducted an in-depth examination of eight Adams compositions that met at least one of the researcher-created criteria of Repertoire Importance, Recognized Soloist, Unique Challenges/Innovations, and Recognized Difficulty. These compositions included *Harmonielehre, Tromba lontana, Short Ride in a Fast Machine, The Wound-Dresser, On the Transmigration of Souls, My Father Knew Charles Ives, Doctor Atomic Symphony,* and *City Noir.* All of these works contain trumpet solos that are central to each composition. Both professional and aspiring trumpet players can experience artistic and technical growth through the preparation and performance of these pieces.

The examination of Adams’s trumpet music also highlights Adams’s development as a composer. In his early works, the challenges are typically a consequence of the endurance issues created by minimalistic repeating figures and structures. As Adams grew as a composer, the challenges in his later works begin to reveal a thorough understanding of the idiomatic qualities of the trumpet and the abilities of professional performers. These trumpet parts also reflect his contrapuntal, post-minimalist style. Therefore, his third and fourth-period compositions often contain virtuosic, soloistic passages in both the principal and section parts.
John Adams’s music presents the trumpet player with musical, technical, and physical challenges. As more of his works find a place in the standard repertoire, it is important that trumpet players become aware of the demands found in his music. Many of his pieces require tremendous endurance, technical dexterity, and extended solo playing at levels that go above and beyond many of the standard orchestral trumpet excerpts. Carefully studying excerpts or trumpet parts from Adams’s music will help players acquaint themselves with his compositions and prepare for future performances of his works. Additionally, practicing his pieces will expand trumpet players’ abilities in the areas of lyrical playing, flexibility, stamina, and musicality.

Adams’s oeuvre contains a wealth of challenging trumpet material, and further studies are recommended. The researcher made attempts to contact Adams for this study, but in the end, an interview could not be arranged.271 A conversation with Adams about his trumpet music would give additional insight into his approach to trumpet writing. A performance guide to the trumpet parts of Doctor Atomic, which contains a plethora of demanding passages, would be quite useful to both professional and aspiring trumpet players. Additionally, an examination of Adams’s recent The Gospel According to the Other Mary would likely reveal more of the complexities found in Adams’s trumpet parts. Finally, the development of an annotated Adams trumpet excerpt book, for which this study lays the groundwork, would be highly beneficial to trumpet players in the future.272

271 Conducting an interview with Adams regarding his trumpet music is still a goal that the researcher will pursue in the future.

272 The researcher plans on pursing this endeavor as well.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Audio Recording, Musical Score, and Video Recording Sources


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**Book, Dissertation, and Journal Article Sources**


**Internet Sources**


**APPENDIX A**

**THE RANGES AND MUTE SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE TRUMPET PARTS IN JOHN ADAMS’S COMPOSITIONS**

*Example A.1: Pitch Classification*

![Pitch Classification Diagram]

*Table A.1: Ranges and Mute Specifications for the Trumpet Parts in John Adams’s Works.*

Note: All Pitches are in concert pitch

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Tones in Simple Time (1979)</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Straight mutes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet 1 in C</td>
<td>C^4 – B^5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet 2 in C</td>
<td>C^4 – F♯^5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Harmonium</strong> (1980-81)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no mutes used</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet 1 in B♭, C, and D</td>
<td>Trumpet in D: D^4 – E^6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trumpet in C: E^4 – B^5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trumpet in B♭: F♯^3 – A^5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Range: F♯^3 – E^6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet 2 in B♭ and C</td>
<td>Trumpet in C: A♭^3 – B^5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trumpet in B♭: F♯^3 – F♯^5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Range: F♯^3 – B^5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet 3 in B♭ and C</td>
<td>Trumpet in C: A♭^3 – B♭^5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trumpet in B♭: A^3 – B♭^4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Range: A♭^3 – B♭^5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet 4 in B♭ and C</td>
<td>Trumpet in C: A♭^3 – A^5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trumpet in B♭: A^3 – G♭^4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Range: A♭^3 – A^5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grand Pianola Music (1982)</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Straight mutes and Harmon mutes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet 1 in B♭ and C</td>
<td>Trumpet in C: B^4 – C♭^6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trumpet in B♭: E^4 – C♭^6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Range: E^4 – C♭^6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet 2 in B♭ and C</td>
<td>Trumpet in C: E^4 – C♭^6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trumpet in B♭: A♭^3 – A♭^5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Range: A♭^3 – A♭^5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Harmonielehre (1985)

| Trumpet 1 in C | E₉³ – D₆⁶ |
| Trumpet 2 in C | C₇⁴ – B₅⁵ |
| Trumpet 3 in C | G₇³ – B₅⁵ |
| Trumpet 4 in C | G₃ – B₅⁵ |

### The Chairman Dances (1985)

| Trumpet 1 in B♭ | D⁴ – B₅⁵ |
| Trumpet 2 in B♭ | A⁵ – F♭⁵ |

### Tromba lontana (1985)

No mutes used

| Trumpet 1 in C | D⁴ – A⁵ |
| Trumpet 2 in C | D⁴ – A♭⁵ |

### Short Ride in a Fast Machine (1986)

No mutes used

| Trumpet 1 in C | A⁵ – D⁶ |
| Trumpet 2 in C | A⁵ – C♭⁶ |
| Trumpet 3 in C | A⁵ – B♭⁵ |
| Trumpet 4 in C | A⁵ – B♭⁵ |

### Nixon in China (1987)

Straight mutes, Harmon mutes, and Plunger mutes

| Trumpet 1 in C | A⁵ – D⁶ |
| Trumpet 2 in C | A⁵ – C♭⁶ |
| Trumpet 3 in C | F♭⁵ – A♭⁵ |

### Fearful Symmetries (1988)

Straight mutes, Harmon mutes

| Trumpet 1 in C | G⁵ – D⁶ |
| Trumpet 2 in C | B♭⁵ – B♭⁵ |
| Trumpet 3 in C | G⁵ – G♭⁵ |

### The Wound Dresser (1988)

Straight mute (for Trumpet in C only)

| Trumpet in C and Piccolo Trumpet in C | Piccolo Trumpet in C: G⁴ – E⁶ |
| Trumpet in C: C♭⁴ – B♭⁵ |
| Total Range: C♭⁴ – E⁶ |

### The Death of Klinghoffer (1991)

Straight mutes

<p>| Trumpet 1 in C | G³ – E⁶ |
| Trumpet 2 in C | G³ – B♭⁵ |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>El Dorado</strong> (1991)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Straight mutes (for Trumpet in C only)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet 1 in C, Flugelhorn 1 in B♭ (Optional Piccolo Trumpet in C)</td>
<td>(Optional Piccolo Trumpet in C: A♭⁵ – C⁶)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trumpet in C: B♭⁵ – D⁶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flugelhorn 1 in B♭: C⁴ – A♭⁵</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Range: B♭⁵ – D⁶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet 2 in C, Flugelhorn 2 in B♭</td>
<td>Trumpet in C: A♭⁵ – C⁶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flugelhorn 2 in B♭: C⁴ – D⁵</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Range: A♭⁵ – C⁶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet 3 in C</td>
<td>A♭⁵ – B⁵</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Chamber Symphony</strong> (1992)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Straight mute and fiber mute</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trumpet in C</td>
<td>G♭⁴ – C♯⁶</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Violin Concerto</strong> (1993)</th>
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<td>Straight mute, metal straight mute</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trumpet in C</td>
<td>F♯⁴ – E⁶</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Lollapalooza</strong> (1995)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Straight mutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trumpet 1 in C</td>
<td>C⁴ – D♭⁶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet 2 in C</td>
<td>B♭⁵ – B♭⁵</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet 3 in C</td>
<td>G⁵ – A⁵</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Scratchband</strong> (1996)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Straight mute</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trumpet in C</td>
<td>A♭⁵ – C♯⁶</td>
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<th><strong>Slonimsky’s Earbox</strong> (1996)</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Trumpet 1 in C</td>
<td>C⁴ – D♭⁶</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trumpet 2 in C</td>
<td>C⁴ – B♭⁵</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet 3 in C</td>
<td>F♯⁴ – A⁵</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet 4 in C</td>
<td>B⁴ – E⁵</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Century Rolls</strong> (1997)</th>
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<td>Straight mutes, cardboard mutes (straight)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trumpet 1 in C</td>
<td>C♯⁴ – D⁶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet 2 in C</td>
<td>A⁴ – B⁵</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet 3 in C</td>
<td>F♯⁴ – G⁵</td>
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## Naive and Sentimental Music (1999)

<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet 1 in C</td>
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<td>Trumpet 2 in C</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trumpet 3 in C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet 4 in C</td>
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## Guide to Strange Places (2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet 1 in C</td>
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<td>Trumpet 2 in C</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trumpet 3 in C</td>
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## On the Transmigration of Souls (2002)

<table>
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<tbody>
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<td>Trumpet 1 in C</td>
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<td>Trumpet 2 in C</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trumpet 3 in C</td>
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## My Father Knew Charles Ives (2003)

<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet 1 in C</td>
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<td>Trumpet 2 in C</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trumpet 3 in C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet 4 in B$\flat$ and C</td>
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## The Dharma at Big Sur (2003)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Straight mutes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet 1 in C and D</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Trumpet 2 in C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet 3 in C</td>
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## Doctor Atomic (2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Straight mutes (for Trumpet in C only)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet 1 in C and Piccolo Trumpet in B$\flat$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Trumpet 2 in C</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trumpet 3 in C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Flowering Tree</strong> (2006)</td>
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<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Straight mutes (both for Trumpet in C and Piccolo Trumpet in B♭)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Trumpet 1 in C and Piccolo Trumpet in B♭ | Piccolo Trumpet in B♭: A⁴ – E⁶  
Trumpet in C: F♯³ – D⁶  
Total Range: F♯³ – E⁶  |
| Trumpet 2 in C | F♯⁴ – C⁶  |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Doctor Atomic Symphony</strong> (2007)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Straight mutes (both for Trumpet in C and Piccolo Trumpet in B♭)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Trumpet 1 in C</td>
<td>G⁵ – C♯⁶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet 2 in C</td>
<td>G³ – A♯⁵</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet 3 in C</td>
<td>C⁴ – A⁵</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Trumpet 4 in C and Piccolo Trumpet in B♭ | Piccolo Trumpet in B♭: B⁴ – E♭⁶  
Trumpet in C: B³ – F♯⁵  
Total Range: B³ – E♭⁶  |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Son of Chamber Symphony</strong> (2007)</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Straight mute</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet in C</td>
<td>F♯⁴ – D⁶</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>City Noir</strong> (2009)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Straight mutes, Harmon mutes with no stems</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet 1 in C</td>
<td>F♯³ – D⁶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet 2 in C</td>
<td>G³ – C♯⁶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet 3 in C</td>
<td>F♯⁴ – A³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet 4 in C</td>
<td>F♯⁴ – A⁵</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Absolute Jest</strong> (2012)</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Straight mutes (both for Trumpet in C and Piccolo Trumpet in B♭)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Trumpet 1 in C and Piccolo Trumpet in B♭ | Piccolo Trumpet in B♭: B⁴ – D⁶  
Trumpet in C: G♯³ – D⁶  
Total Range: G♯³ – D⁶  |
| Trumpet 2 in C | G♯³ – B⁶  |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>The Gospel According to the Other Mary</strong> (2012)</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Straight mutes, cardboard mutes (straight), and bucket mutes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet 1 in C</td>
<td>F♯³ – D⁶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet 2 in C</td>
<td>F♯³ – B⁶</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Saxophone Concerto</strong> (2013)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Straight mutes, cardboard mutes (straight)</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet 1 in C</td>
<td>G⁵ – B³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet 2 in C</td>
<td>F♯⁵ – G♯³</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>