The Honogenization of Trombone Sound Preferences: The effects of a more global society on national styles

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*The Homogenization of Trombone Sound Preferences: The effects of a more global society on national styles*

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The trombone and music in general have been greatly influenced by globalization. Over the past few decades the ideal playing style of trombone has become increasingly similar throughout the world. The fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the integration of Eastern Europe into the rest of the Western world marked a turning point in the way that music was perceived and shared. More and more musicians began to blend their playing styles as they traveled across borders and oceans. Sharp contrasts by region in interpretation of literature and the ideal sound were common in the early 1990's, but today the mature listener can only find subtle differences in the playing styles of professionals from various regions. The rise of technology and availability of music to be shared across great distances attributed to the assimilation of musical styles, as did ease of travel and international relations.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE TROMBONE

PHYSICAL

Today’s playing style of the trombone has been altered greatly when compared with the ideal sound of the nineteenth century. Although the trombone became much more widely used in operatic and symphonic settings in this time period, this shift did not occur because of the technology of the instrument itself, but rather because a cultural shift.

As with other instruments, the trombone saw the greatest developmental changes during the nineteenth century and the industrial revolution. As amateur music making flourished, so did the trombone. Trombone manufacturing found its way into a factory setting, thus changing several aspects of the instrument itself, including the manufacture of cheap and superior instruments. This grouped trombonists into amateur and professional categories, an effect felt today in one’s ability to buy a student horn.
Slide stockings – the end portion of the slides that are wider in diameter in order to reduce friction – were developed in the mid-nineteenth century but Reginald Birdsall Olds took the idea to an extreme. Olds patented a slide with a fluted rather than circular bore in 1937, an advancement that was used by many trombonists of the time. The Super Trombone, aptly named by Olds, was very popular at the time because of the severely reduced amount of friction. The Olds trombone proved to have a very short lifespan due to the fact that the most minor dent rendered the instrument useless and was very difficult, if not impossible, to repair.

Figure 1 - Advertisement for the Reginald Olds Super Trombone (Steward)

The size of the bore became the hot topic of American trombone manufacturing in the 1940s. The bore of an instrument is determined by measuring the inside diameter of the inner slide at the bottom. Thusly, horns dubbed as medium bore usually have a bore diameter of 0.500” to 0.530”. The medium bore horn was widely used in jazz and dance bands, while the
large bore trombone (usually 0.547”) was popular with American orchestras. Europe saw the introduction of the differently bored trombones after the Second World War. British brass bands still were quite partial to the small-bored instrument – 0.450” to 0.500”. It was only after Barrats of Manchester promised a horn that was large-bored and tuned to the standard A=440 Hz, that British brass bands began to use large-bored horns. (Guion 2010, 48)

Large-bored trombones became the standard for orchestral and solo playing. Tenor trombone saw far fewer alterations than the bass trombone, but both share the advancements of the rotary valves. The bass trombone was historically pitched in the key of either B flat or F and had been altered with ‘valves’ or ‘attachments’ that open access to supplementary tubing in order to bridge the gap between the keys of B flat and F with a single instrument. Pictured below is a cutaway diagram of how a rotary valve works, before and after depression of the valve.

![Figure 2 - Cutaway rotary valve (Ortner)](image)

Today, bass trombone manufacturers now include a second valve attachment allowing the instrument to be pitched in yet a different key (depending on the tuning). Although the
double-piston valve, introduced by Christian Friedrich Sattler in 1821, was used in Belgium until the middle of the twentieth century, the rotary valve became far more popular. Technological advancements allowed for a more precise rotary valve that would achieve greater fluidity and accuracy in use. Many different styles of rotary valves exist today and are employed in both the tenor and the bass trombone. The most recent style of trombone valve is the conically shaped Thayer Axel-Flow Valve. This valve, invented in 1976, is a solution to the problem of tone color change when the traditional valve is depressed. The traditional valve bends the air at subsequent 45 degree angles but this valve does not allow for air to change any greater than 25 degrees.

Figure 3 - The Thayer Axel-Flow Valve (Edwards)

LITERATURE

Trombone literature diverged into two paths at the beginning of the twentieth century: (1) jazz and bebop, and (2) solo, orchestral, and chamber music. The Romantic era is largely responsible for the expansion of the trombone section in orchestras. Composers such as Beethoven, Berlioz, and especially Wagner, aided the trombone’s favorability in orchestras. Dating back to Monteverdi’s opera Orfeo, and known as the instrument of the underworld and death, the trombone often portrayed graveyards and underworld excursions within the orchestral
setting. It wasn’t until the twentieth century that solo literature and technique books became more frequent. In the early twentieth century, the trombone world was largely dominated by American figures, due to the popularity of jazz and band music.

America began to develop its own tradition of trombone playing in the twentieth century mainly because it was developing its own traditions. The US was also greatly influenced by the band tradition being created by those like Patrick Gilmore (1829-1892) and John Philip Sousa (1854-1932). Arthur Pryor (1870-1942) is one example of an American unconstrained by conventions. Pryor gained much of his popularity after joining Sousa’s band in 1892, through his virtuosic cadenzas and impeccable showmanship on trombone. Pryor’s virtuosity seemed to have influence on both jazz trombonists – in concept of virtuosity alone – and those in the classical tradition.

Europe’s influence on trombone literature is not to be underestimated, nor does it stand in any shadow created by Pryor as an innovator in trombone technicality. Contest pieces written for the Paris Conservatory are among the most virtuosic in the early twentieth century. Among the most notable are Camille Saint-Saëns’s Cavatine Op. 155 (1915) and Alexandre Guilmant’s Morceau Symphonique Op. 88 (1899). Also in the German tradition is the notable Sonata for Trombone and Piano (1941) by Paul Hindemith, which was one of the first significant sonata written for trombone.

Brass ensembles were critical to the development of trombone literature. The Phillip Jones Brass Ensemble, New York Brass Quintet, and American Brass Quintet, all employed trombonists and assisted in the increase of importance of trombone in smaller settings. These
ensembles grew in number, which led to greater numbers of compositions being written specifically for them.

Jazz accepted trombones as a standard instrument very early on and had one of the most influential impacts on solo repertoire. Jazz styles are heard in many modern compositions for trombone, namely in the virtuosity that is attributed to playing jazz solos. Trombonists repeatedly had leading roles in jazz ensembles, placing them in the foreground of development of new styles. The experimental and uninhibited nature of the genre allowed for the development of techniques and musical styles. The encouraged originality of jazz was influenced by several trombonists – even those not involved in jazz, such as the aforementioned Arthur Pryor. Jazz trombonists such as Miff Mole and Georg Brunis led the way in composition and playing style within the genre.

THE BERLIN WALL AND THE SOVIET UNION – A REPRESENTATION OF NATIONALISM

Before the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the Soviet Union in 1991, the playing styles of trombonists were usually highly characterized by distinct nationalistic qualities. Despite the fact that Western European countries each held their own sound qualities, when trombone music is observed, the starkest contrast to their playing style was found in Eastern European countries. These contrasts attributed greatly to the preserved nature of the nationalistic differences in the playing styles. The great divide in musical interpretation that occurred within the trombone world was particularly influenced by the political history of the areas being discussed, East Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).
THE HISTORY OF THE UNION OF SOCIALIST SOVIET REPUBLICS AND THE ARTS

The Soviet Union was a single-party state of 15 sub-national Soviet republics that was ruled by a single communist party until 1991. (See figure 2 below.)

Figure 4 - Map of the USSR (Encyclopedia Britannica)

In this communist state freedom of expression was closely monitored; thus the arts did not serve their traditional purpose as a form of free expression. The controlling government altered the state of the arts completely within the USSR through the promotion of state supported music and art, and a different interpretation of trombone was eventually created.

After the Russian Revolution of 1917, the Russian Empire collapsed and a struggle for power began. The Bolshevik party, led by Vladimir Lenin, fought vehemently against the anti-communist White Movement for control of the empire. After five years of civil war, the Bolshevik party appeared victorious with Vladimir Lenin as the leader. However, two years later Lenin died and Joseph Stalin began his rise to absolute power.

It was under Stalin that the communist party began to exert large scale control over its people. Stalin led massive reforms, often brutal, both social and industrial. Millions were imprisoned under his control. When Germany and its allies invaded the USSR in 1941, they
violated the non-aggression pact, signed in 1939. Despite this violation of agreements between the two countries, the Soviet Union would eventually emerge victorious.

After the Second World War the Soviet Union was ready to take advantage of its Eastern European neighbors. The United States saw the threat of this super power and created the Truman Doctrine to offer assistance to these countries. The non-communist West and the USSR fought in the decades after WWII over the political alignment of Eastern European and Latin American countries, which was aptly named the Cold War. Mikhail Gorbachev’s *perestroika* and *glasnost* programs – meaning “reconstruction” and “openness” respectively – were economic principles that many blame for the collapse of the USSR. They inspired a new spirit in the USSR which led to the breaking away of several areas that were under its possession, and eventually the official dissolving of the USSR in December 1991.

The Soviet Union sought to control the arts as well as oppress any Western influence that may have existed. In the Stalin era, 1918-1929, there was a quest to create the quintessential Russian style of the arts. Subsequently, groups such as the Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians were formed. The formation of these societies allowed the government to ‘encourage’ artists to stay away from any new formalist movements. This early government interference gave many musicians the motivation to leave the Soviet Union. Many who did not have the foresight to leave were persecuted later; they were imprisoned, banned from publishing, or expatriated from the country all together.

During the Stalin era artistic freedom was not tolerated and many artists were unable to flee. Several writers, such as Osip Mandelstam, faced execution because their writing was not in line with what the government encouraged. (Lekmanov 2010, 245) Government social control
created a completely new generation of musicians who had not been greatly influenced by the West. Musicians were largely repressed also; at times no soviet composers were allowed to publish.

Propaganda music was one of the most important features of the Soviet Union. One form of such music is the mass song. These simple songs were meant to unite people (or rather oppress the masses) and promote the government; however, they exerted a great deal of control on music itself. Because musicians sought government support for their work, the mass song flourished. (Zabel 1990, 95) Also, the mass song had a great impact on the reduction of the number of instrumental works.

The Zhdanov Doctrine shaped music incredibly, although at first glance it could be puzzling as to why. The basic idea of the doctrine was that “the only conflict that is possible in Soviet culture is the conflict between good and best.” (First 2008) The doctrine divided the world into two segments, the imperialistic United States and the democratic Soviet Union. The ability to censure music was also in the doctrine. The doctrine created particular tension between Dmitri Shostakovich and Stalin, who prohibited his music twice – in 1936 and 1948. (Moshevich 2004, 79)

Musicians under the rule of Stalin experienced a lot of rigidity in what they were permitted to write or perform, as did Shostakovich. Many musicians were subjected to harsh scrutiny and many ended up fleeing or being expatriated. Most notably Aram Khachaturian and Sergei Prokofiev had several run-ins with the government and censorship. (Brown 2006)

Music pedagogy in the Soviet Union was not very distinct from elsewhere in the world. Trombonists often learned in conservatories or through military bands; once again the literature
they played was often dictated by the government. Trombonists such as Alex Kofman took this particular path. Kofman joined a military band at the age of 16 and afterward he attended the Gnesisn Institute in Moscow. Kofman was fortunate enough to be selected to play in state sponsored jam sessions with artists like Duke Ellington. Kofman immigrated to the United States in 1973, like many other musicians. (Anonymous 1999)

As individual states left the Soviet Union in the 1990s, musicians toured or emigrated in an effort to showcase their talents, something that had not been widely available in nearly a half of a century. The musicians that performed for Western Europe and America played with a much different style than had been common to the Western listener’s ears at the time. The quintessential Soviet style of trombone playing seemed much less refined than say a French or English trombonist. Trombonists of the former Soviet Union were perhaps left behind when the technical demands developed without them.

THE HISTORY OF EAST GERMANY AND THE ARTS

After the Second World War, the Allies divided up Germany into four zones controlled by the United States, France, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union. (See Figure 2.)

Figure 5 – Illustration of the division of Germany. (Anonymous)
Germany existed under the control of these four countries for four years. The city of Berlin, though quite within Soviet territory, was also split into sections of occupation. In 1949 tensions motivated Great Britain, the United States, and France to combine the areas that they held to create the Bundesrepublik Deutschland (BRD). The Soviet Union followed with the creation of the Deutsche Demokratische Republik (DDR) in Eastern Germany.

Although the DDR was created on October 7, 1949, the United States did not officially recognize it as a country until May 6, 1955. In the time between the DDR’s separation and recognition, the United States gave approval to those in power in the city of Bonn to oversee the attempts to bring the DDR to democracy.

Between the acquisition of the land recognized as the DDR and the implementation of the Berlin Wall in 1961, citizens of the DDR were allowed to visit the West, despite the administration of a law in 1950 banning movement between countries.

After approximately 2.7 million East Germans emigrated, frontier barriers were constructed in 1961 (Childs 1969, 102). The most famous of these barriers was the Berlin Wall, erected quite literally overnight. The majority of the barriers were simply barbed wire or fences, as they were placed in the countryside of the picturesque nation. The Berlin Wall was quite the opposite; it served partially as a defense against migration in one of the largest cities, and partially as statement of power. The ‘wall’ was literally built overnight, but the hasty fence was not sustainable. In Berlin it slowly transformed into a complete barrier that consisted of an electric fence, the “death strip” (where guard towers overlooked an open area enforced with watch dogs and landmines) and the image that everyone sees, a physical wall.
The DDR had a culture strongly influenced by communism. The culture of the people was somewhat stagnant because of the state’s goal of ‘protecting’ its people from outside influences, which were considered dangerous. The Stasi were a secret police that enforced these anti-Western cultural laws. They enforced the creation of a unique East German culture through psychological tactics and repression of the people.

Much like the Soviet Union, many outside artistic influences were banned. This included both popular and classical music. Those who were suspected of promulgating these outside influences of art were closely watched or detained by the Stasi. Fred Prieberg wrote of the decline of musical performance attendance between 1960 and 1966, showing that concert goers dwindled by half. (Prieberg 1968, p. 28) This is a trend that continued throughout the socialist regime and can be inferred to indicate the importance of music not of East German origin.

The most accepted form of art in East Germany was Socialist Realism; art that depicted the joys of everyday life under the rule of the state. One of the most notable artists of the Socialist Realism movement was Walter Womacka.
Popular music was strongly influenced by the rule of the party, with rock bands being expected to sing in German only. Song texts, both popular and classical, were inspected carefully. Nevertheless, simply because of technology the state was not able to completely silence Western musical influences. Because of the size of Germany and capabilities of radio and TV transmitters, the signal was not able to be blocked. Communications could be heard by many East Germans.
At first glance the DDR seems to be the typical repressive government that was unsupportive of one’s free expression, but they promoted artists native to their land. East Germany commemorated the life of Johann Sebastian Bach and converted his house in Eisenach into a museum. In fact, the government contributed greatly to music in the context of history through compiling all of Bach’s works, letters, instruments, and documents in the Bach-Archiv Leipzig in 1950. (Bach-Archiv Leipzig) However, they heavily criticized music from other countries. For example, this is a caricature that was common for the time that depicts the music of John Cage in a negative manner.

![Figure 8 - East German cartoon of the music of John Cage (Prieberg 1968)](image)

Aside from music that was pertinent to the culture being promoted, musicians were stunted in their ability to assist creating their own East German style. The availability of new technology was hindered due to importation laws and lack of supplies from within the country. Composer Hans Tutschku recounted his luck in obtaining a synthesizer through a friend who travelled abroad, but more importantly he related the scarcity of the music of Western composers. Tutschku gives an account of the situation in his interview with Ketty Nez:
“In East Germany, the musical politics were very defined in terms of a social realism. Stockhausen, Cage, West German composers, and western composers in general were not played very much. There were some bigger festivals, as in Dresden or Leipzig, which provided possibilities for performing their music, but not very much.” (Nez and Tutschku 2003, 14)

He goes on to recapitulate a tale of rehearsing Stockhausen’s music in churches as they could not do so in concert halls due to the restrictions placed upon his music. Though Tutschku was a composer of keyboard music, his experience was quite similar to that of trombonists.

NATIONAL STYLES OF TROMBONE PLAYING

National styles of playing are constantly being developed and changing within the context of each nation considered. Andrew Leyshon wrote that “The imitation of natural songs, the quotation of folk songs and dances, and references to localities and regions could rhetorically tie music to the rhythmical structures of land, landscape and language.” (Leyshon, Matless, and Revill 1995, 423-433) His statement implies that music is greatly influenced by culture and the context in which it is performed. It serves as an affirmation of the opinion that before the opening of Eastern Europe to the Western world, trombone playing styles were distinctly different.

The quintessential American style of trombone playing was refined in part because of the popularity of band music, and by the popularity of jazz. The boisterous trombone sound of bands commanded by Sousa is stark in comparison to the subtle sounds of Western Europe. Even today, these differences between the US and European trombonists are largely apparent to educators of trombone.

The Americans and Western Europeans have different concepts of what is considered to qualify a performer as professional, or high achieving, both before and after the opening of the
borders between 1989 and 1991. Today, the American style is considered more legato and fluid than the European style. However, in general, these styles are more similar to one another than in years prior.

In a survey conducted for this paper, trombonists from Northern and Western Europe, and the US were asked for their opinions on the style of playing within their own country, as it stands alone, and in comparison with the perceived American style. The survey takers all had the opportunity to hear the same excerpt played in several different styles and were asked to declare which one they preferred and why. Aside from the initial agreement to the terms of the survey, the answering of all questions was optional.¹

A trombonist from the trombone studio at Western Michigan University was asked to record the following excerpt from a book of etudes and perform it in several different styles.

![Figure 9 - Excerpt Vocalises for Trombone no. 16 (Bordogni 1928)](image)

The first interpretation was played in the typical American style – somewhat legato but with definition between the notes and prominent vibrato. There was a consensus among the American respondents that it was played in a correct style, but the Europeans surveyed preferred more legato unanimously. However, most American respondents commented that it could be

¹ Full results and original survey are located in the appendix.
more legato. Almost all surveyed decided that the selection could have more dynamics and phrase shaping.

In the second interpretation, the performer was asked to play in a more legato manner. All but one respondent agreed that this could be a correct interpretation. Most surveyed said that there should be more dynamics. Four respondents agreed that there should be more legato phrasing. The third selection was rather staccato. All European respondents agreed that it was too staccato; one from Germany responded that the tempo was too strict. However, four American participants agreed that it could be interpreted that way. The fourth selection was very staccato and all agreed that it needed to be more legato.

Overall, the feedback from the American and European participants led to a consensus on how the selection was to be played. When looking at the survey results for these four questions, these trends are easily seen. Although the European participants had a tendency to want more legato phrasing, they generally answered similarly to the American participants. Many describe European trombonists, specifically the French, as favoring a smoother attack. (Haynie) This is apparent in recordings of more recent years, specifically in Branimir Slokar’s interpretation of Frank Martin’s *Ballade for Trombone and Orchestra*. Slokar studied the Ljubljana Academy of Music, under Soviet rule, before he continued his studies in Paris. At the time of the recording, Slokar held positions in Freiburg and the Berne Conservatory as a professor of trombone. Hardly any attacks are heard within even the most robust phrases. Slokar embodies the typical homogenized style created by a Soviet upbringing and Western training. (Slokar 1984)

The stylistic differences in trombone playing are very apparent in recordings of trombonists from the early to mid 1990s. Specifically, a reference can be made to Anatoly
Skobelev’s recording of music for French horn on alto-trombone. Skobelev is a trombonist from St. Petersburg, who graduated from the Leningrad Conservatoire. At the time of the recording he was a soloist of the Russian National Orchestra. Skobelev’s vibrato tends to be less stable than the trained Western ear is accustomed to hearing, and trills are not as smooth as the traditional Western style. Though he performs on alto trombone, the tone quality leaves much to be desired in terms of fullness, when one listens with an ethnocentric ear.

In a collaborative CD by Armin Rosin and Michel Becquet, the listener can hear the legato and mellow sound of the German and French trombonists. Becquet is credited as “bringing the trombone back to Europe” and it is evident why. His playing style does not include any flaws. (Rosin) His rendition of the Lars-Eric Larsson Concerto for Trombone and Strings is a good example of his interpretation of the trombone literature. His playing style is very legato with exaggerated dynamics and a rather quick vibrato. Michel Becquet, a French trombonist, though he spent time teaching in Cologne, Germany, is said to embody the French school of wind instrument playing. (Laanen 2008) Even in the staccato sections of Marcel Landowski’s Concertino for Trombone and Strings, one only hears pure tone and soft articulations. (Becquet and Rosin 1992)

SHARING OF MUSIC AND MUSICIANS

During the early 1990s there was an influx of trombonists travelling from the former Soviet Union and East Germany to Western countries. These trombonists played in a style much different than what was familiar to the Western audiences. It is essential to approach the diasporas of the Western style of trombone playing to the former Soviet Union and DDR with an ethnomusicological viewpoint. This is not an uncommon practice when dealing with distinctly
different styles, though this method is not traditionally employed when the same instrument and repertoire are the grounds for comparison.

The reason why this approach is appropriate for this study is because of the situation of Eastern Europe politically during the late 1980s and 1990s. The lack of influence by other countries and distinct national styles can be compared to the music of a non-Western society, where outside influences have failed to impact the music in the area greatly.

The migration of musicians, particularly trombonists, from Eastern Europe into the West changed the face of trombone playing greatly, but the touring of Western musicians in Eastern Europe was influential as well. Those who were not fortunate or talented enough to easily travel or emigrate to the West could hear the style of music that had become predominate while they were behind the iron curtain through technological advances in TV and radio. Although teachers and professionals already had a set idea of what trombone playing should sound like, the influence of the West was greatly felt on students at the time. We see this as an incredible factor on the trombone style of the twenty-first century, especially with the homogenizing of the typical trombone playing style.

Music has been influenced greatly by globalization, even though most do not consider the arts privy to the topic. Martin Stokes wrote that the field of globalization study is dominated by social science, which often gives the impression of being ill-equipped, or disinclined, to consider issues specific to music and dance. (Stokes 2004, 47-72) This is very true, as little study has been done in field of music and globalization. The social since view must undergo a paradigm shift that accepts globalization as a factor in music, particularly the development of today’s trombone style. Music became able to be shared with many Eastern countries in the 1990s, as did the
playing style. As indicated through the survey, participants often listed common trombonists as influences, such as Ian Bousfield or Joseph Alessi, mainly because of the availability of travel across borders. This is an indication of the globalization of the trombone playing style.

When one considers the literature played by trombonists, the distinct styles of trombone playing that developed are even more substantial. Unlike the world of piano or voice, the trombone does not have a great amount of music available for its players. Trombonists typically play many of the same works, often including excerpts from famous orchestral pieces. Because the musical literature acts as control factor of sorts, if one approaches this with a scientific viewpoint, the stylistic differences in approach are deducted as being caused by the culture in which the trombonist studied.

RISE OF THE DIGITAL AGE

The opening of Eastern Europe coincided with technological developments that altered the public perception of music. Record companies had always maintained authority over the music that was published, yet their influence grew larger toward the approach of the new millennium. Andrew Leyshon writes that the making of music is not only a cultural and sociological process but an economic one as well. (Leyshon, Matless, and Revill 1995, 423-433)

Record companies of the late twentieth century took hold of a cultural revolution in terms of the way music is heard and distributed. The development of new technologies, such as records, cassettes, and CDs, advanced the control over the distribution of the various media sources. In 1992 the worldwide sales were dominated by only five corporations: Warners, Bertlesmann Music Group, Polygram International Group, EMI-Virgin, and Sony. A correlation surely exists between this small market and the creation of trombone “heroes” within the
community. The market could not feature every professional trombonist on a wide-scale, so this likely contributed to the popularity of international figures such as Christian Lindberg and Joseph Alessi. The lack of preference for trombonists by the recording companies also contributed to the homogenization of trombone sound. For example, only a few companies – such as Crystal Records – made it a goal to frequently produce recordings of classical soloists. Lindberg signed with one such company, BIS, that released classical recordings in Scandinavia. Trombonists in search of recorded literature recognized the scarcity of the recordings.

Recordings opened the world to those who did not have access to major concert halls and opera houses in a time when many performers did not have access to Eastern European concert halls and opera houses. The market for classical recordings is largest, at 11% of total record sales, in Hungary, followed by the Netherlands at 10%, Germany at 8% and France at 7%. The United States trails at only 3% of total record sales accounted for as classical. Though these numbers are substantial overall, they are still only a small percentage. The market boomed merely because of the fact that classical music is exactly that, classic. Recording companies could rely on the classical market to maintain sales when popular music was down. This market is rather finicky though, recordings that are heard are often of high quality, leaving no mistake to the imagination. (Gronow 1998, 459) This is most likely because of the market that exists; a music lover who is willing to pay for these recordings wants high quality. Also, if the quality is high, the music can be resold to new generations.

The control over the media sources that record companies held in their hands was slowly diminishing because of information mediums such as the internet. As the internet rises in popularity, the influence of this vast information source is becoming more apparent. Recording and film companies have – rather unsuccessfully – been attempting to control their content that
has become freely available on the internet. The internet has become yet another resource for budding trombonists looking for their next idol. The free, though sometimes illegal, access to recordings of the most famous players provides an opportunity for a large number of musicians to gain access.

We currently cannot judge how great of an impact websites like YouTube will have on music. We are at the begging of a new phase in the sharing and development of music because of these ‘open-source’ media mediums. One can search “trombone” on youtube.com and receive over 75,000 results, from videos of trombone choirs playing *Stars and Stripes* that have over 1 million views to a master class that is performed by world-renown trombonists. The versatility of the medium of recordings easily contributes to the homogenization of the ideal trombone sound with every click of a YouTube link.

The exponential development and blossoming of recorded trombone literature has caused many trombonists to hear the same literature. Common trombone “heroes” have developed as one result of the rise of the digital age. Many trombonists today can refer to a single recording by a professional trombonist and have others understand. The digital age has increased the popularity of the trombone “heroes” through the availability of their music.

**A COMMON STYLE**

Today, borders are irrelevant to the trombone style. The differences in playing do not differ greatly and are recognized easily by trombonists of different cultures due to the availability of recordings of trombonists from various cultures. Some musicians were able to identify the sound concepts that were preferred by other countries, they were the fortunate because during the communist era of Eastern Europe borders blocked the permeation of trombone playing styles.
The impact of globalization on the Eastern European countries is distinct when one analyzes
trombone playing styles. After the fall of the communist powers, trombonists of the newly freed
regions looked to Western countries for guidance as well as opportunities to perform. When their
style was rejected as too unique to be considered professional by other standards, many adapted
the playing styles that were commonly accepted in the West. This led to the immediate
homogenization of the sound concepts that trombonists had heard.

Recordings assisted in creating the common playing style by elevating the standards of
performance. For the trombonist who does not have access to a concert hall, a “perfect”
recording is all that he/she may hear. Before the popularity of recordings, it is assumed that
common performance flaws were merely part of the experience; however, especially today with
the availability of editing – though many performers chose not to edit – one does not hear the
true “performance” as if it were live. This has left trombonists with a new level of perfection to
attain – a level of perfection often standardized by popular trombonists of Europe and the United
States.

Though a common playing style exists, each region has its own preferences in terms of
equipment. For professional trombonists, finding the best trombone to suit one’s needs is an
important endeavor. I chose the word endeavor because of the lack of availability of trombone
brands across the world. The availability of equipment – both trombone itself and mouthpiece –
is dependent upon the origin of the instrument itself. It is uncommon for an American trombonist
to play on a trombone manufactured in France, just as it is uncommon for a German trombonist
to play on a trombone manufactured in Germany. The distinct brand differences recorded among
survey participants assists in this conclusion. Cost was, and still is, a significant factor for
trombonists choosing equipment. After the opening of the Eastern borders, many of the
trombonists located behind the former iron curtain did not have the means to pay for a high-quality trombone. Organizations such as the International Trombone Association found it necessary to provide donations and grants to trombonists in need. Still today, a professional level trombone from a foreign country is not obtainable to most trombonists due to cost. This proves to be one of the last dividing issues related to the ideal sound of a trombone. When one relates the equipment issue to the availability of music and trombonists prior to the development of technology or permeability of borders, it is easily understood.

It is then deducted that the common style that is played is dependent on globalization. Globalization was, and still is, the cause for the world tours of many trombonists. Without the trombone as an instrument widely recognized as a staple in music this would not be possible. Trombone has transcended borders in many countries today, as has the influences that accompany it. As a standard repertoire has developed so has a standard playing style.

CONCLUSION

Globalization is generally a term with negative connotations, but in terms of trombone playing it has created some quite positive associations as well. Some may view the homogenization of the preferred style of trombone playing as a loss to national culture; be that as it may, since the opening of Eastern Europe to democracy trombonists have, as a whole, developed a distinctive style to call their own. The travelling of musicians and permeability of borders allowed influential trombonists to be heard in many locations which they previously had not, followed by the rise of recordings and technology advancing these influences even further into the world of trombone playing. With these theories easily established through the consistency of literature, it will be interesting to hear what the future has to hold for the already
homogenized sound of trombone. In terms of the future, the homogenization of trombone playing style will likely lead to higher levels of virtuosity within the instrument. As less and less interpretations of music become acceptable, preference will be given to the most technically perfect.
Appendix

I. Letter sent requesting participants for survey.

Initial contact document:

(Name of professor),

I would like to invite you and your students to participate in a study I am conducting. I am a student at Western Michigan University in the United States. I am currently working on a thesis that will allow me to graduate from the Honors College at my school. In this thesis, I am trying to establish the norms of the interpretation of trombone literature, with relevance to language and country of origin. With these norms, I hope to deduce what is common to players of specific countries, language backgrounds, and regions. If you are interested in the study, please click the following link:

In order to fully participate, you also must agree to the terms of the Informed Consent Document as outlined in the first question of the aforementioned survey.

If you have any further questions, please contact me at:

	trombone.study@gmail.com

Thank you,

Alyssa Madeira
Western Michigan University
In order to complete this survey, you must agree to the terms of the following document. If you do not agree to the terms outlined, you may not participate. If you have any questions, or would like a copy of this document for personal records, contact trombone.study@gmail.com

* Western Michigan University
School of Music

Principal Investigator: Dr. Steve Wolfinbarger
Assisting Investigator: Alyssa Madeira

Title of Study: A Comparison of Trombone Playing Styles by Region and Language

You have been invited to participate in a research project titled "A Comparison of Trombone Playing Styles by Region and Language." This project will serve to supply supporting data for Alyssa Madeira’s thesis for the requirements for graduation from the Lee Honors College at Western Michigan University. This consent document will explain the purpose of this research project and will go over all of the time commitments, the procedures used in the study, and the risks and benefits of participating in this research project. Please read this consent form carefully and completely and please ask any questions if you need more clarification.

I intend to do a comparison of styles and sound concepts in various regions of the world. By the same survey, I will conclude what can be considered norms unique to region and language. Many professional trombonists agree that there are distinct differences in the interpretation of music by musicians of various nationalities, and this survey would assist in clarifying those differences.

You, as a participant, should be well educated in trombone performance; whether you are a professional, a student, an educator, or a trombone hobbyist. You should not be a native speaker of English, but rather a native speaker of the official language of the country in which you reside.
You should own or have access to a computer with email capabilities. This computer must also be able to play sound recordings.

This study will take place wherever there is computer access and listening capabilities. There is no need for travel.

There is no significant time commitment to this study, it is expected to not exceed more than twenty (20) minutes.

You will be supplied with a link to an online survey. This survey contains various questions regarding recordings, equipment, and sound concepts. After completion of this survey, the data collected will be used to support the thesis.

The study will analyze the preferred interpretation of music, based upon your opinion regarding recordings provided within the survey.

There are no risks, benefits, costs, or compensations involved with participating in this study.

The information collected will only be available to the principal investigator and advisors. The results of the study will be presented in a lecture and possibly published. You will not have to disclose any identifying information. No names will be used, only region and native language.

You can choose to stop participating in the study at anytime for any reason. You will not suffer any prejudice or penalty by your decision to stop your participation. You will experience NO consequences either academically or personally if you choose to withdraw from this study.

The investigator can also decide to stop your participation in the study without your notification.

Should you have any questions prior to or during the study, you can contact the primary investigator, Steve Wolfinbarger at +1-269-387-4699 or preferably trombone.study@gmail.com You may also contact the Chair, Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at +1-269-387-8293 or the Vice President for Research at +1-269-387-8298 if questions arise during the course of the study.

This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner. Do not participate in this study if the stamped date is older than one year.
I have read this informed consent document. The risks and benefits have been explained to me. By clicking "I AGREE", I agree to take part in this study.

I AGREE
I DO NOT AGREE

Basic Information
Please fill out some basic information about yourself:
* Country:
* Native Language
Other:
* Do you currently play trombone?
  Yes
  No
Optional elaboration:
If yes, in what setting do you play the trombone?
  I am a student.
  I play professionally. I am an educator. I play as a hobby.
Comments

Stylistic Interpretations
In the following sections you will hear an interpretation of the following musical selection:

Please indicate whether or not the selection is played in a style which you prefer. If you choose, you have the option of disclosing your reasoning in the "Comments" field.

Please listen to the following audio clip.

Would you interpret the selection that way?
  Yes
  No
  Comments

Would you like to hear this selection:
  More Staccato
  More Tenuto
  More Legato
  More Dynamics
  Comments

Stylistic Interpretations Continued
Would you interpret the previous selection in this manner?
  Yes
  No
Comments
Would you like to hear this selection:
   More Staccato
   More Tenuto
   More Legato
   More Dynamics
Comments

Stylistic Interpretations Continued
Would you interpret the previous selection this way?
   Yes
   No
   Comments

Would you like to hear this selection:
   More Staccato
   More Tenuto
   More Legato
   More Dynamics
Comments

Stylistic Interpretations Continued
Would you interpret the previous selection this way?
   Yes
   No
   Comments

Would you like to hear this selection:
   More Staccato
   More Tenuto
   More Legato
   More Dynamics
Comments

Preferred Equipment and Tone Quality
What is the brand of trombone that you prefer to use? Also, you may elaborate as to why you prefer this brand.

What brand and size mouthpiece do you prefer. Also, you may elaborate why you prefer these.

Please describe characteristics of the ideal tone quality.
   Airy
   Bright
Are there professional players who embody the qualities you have mentioned?
   Yes
   No
What are the names of these players?

Survey Results

Results are coded. Each survey taker was assigned a number. Results have been transposed into a table for ease of reading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>In what setting do you play trombone?</th>
<th>Audio clip 1. Would you interpret it this way? Comments?</th>
<th>Would you like to hear this section: Comments?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>Professional, Educator</td>
<td>Yes.  More cantabile would be preferable</td>
<td>More dynamics. More flowing and phrased, like a singer, less like a trombone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>Professional, Student</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>More legato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Professional, Student</td>
<td>No  Too much vibrato</td>
<td>More dynamics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>No comment.</td>
<td>Yes  Nice playing – work on phrase offs</td>
<td>No it’s pretty OK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Master Student</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>More dynamics  More piano, more legato, pay attention to the end of phrases…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>No Comment</td>
<td>Educator</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>More Legato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Professionally, Play as hobby</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>My biggest problem was the notes before all breaths sounded short as a sacrifice of getting in a full breath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Hobby</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>More Dynamics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Student, Professionally</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Hobby</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>More legato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>More dynamics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>More tenuto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Educator, Hobby (Bass trombone)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>More dynamics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Hobby</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>More legato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>More legato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Educator</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Musically, yes. However, it is too loud for my interpretation of piano.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Student, hobby, (Bass trombone)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>More dynamics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Hobby – when I get the chance to do so</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>I think a bit more fluid, so to speak.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>No Comment</td>
<td>Student, Hobby</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>More dynamics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Audio Clip 2. Would interpret it this way? Comments</th>
<th>Would you like to hear in this section: Comments?</th>
<th>Audio clip 3. Would you interpret it this way? Comments?</th>
<th>Would you like to hear in this section: Comments?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>More Dynamics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3      | No
Nice dynamics but too legato                     | I’d like this section with less vibrato          | No                                              | It’s a bit too boring…tempo is too strict      |
| 4      | Could be                                          | No                                              | More legato                                    |                                                 |
| 5      | Yes
Hard to say, but I like the way it’s playing     | More legato                                     | No
Too many staccato end of notes too short, no dynamics | More legato |
| 6      | Yes                                                |                                                 |                                                 |                                                 |
| 7      | Yes                                                | Compared to the first example, I prefer this one because it is a study in legato. It | No
More dynamics |

Madeira 32
was slowed down without sacrifice of the printed style markings and acceptable dynamic interpretation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Audio Clip 4 Would you interpret it this way? Comments</th>
<th>Would you like to hear this selection: Comments</th>
<th>Pleas describe characteristics of the ideal tone quality</th>
<th>Are there professional players who embody the qualities you have mentioned? Names?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>More Legato</td>
<td>Full, resonant, focused, rounded, clear</td>
<td>JesperJuul (Danish radio), Olav Trondesats, Ian Bousfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>More legato</td>
<td>Dark, full resonant, focused, rounded, clear. There is no ideal tone quality! It</td>
<td>Tobias Schiessler, Frederic Belli, Joe Alessi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
depends on style and instrument - a sackbut shouldn’t sound like a modern tenor trombone. Tone Quality of an excerpt by Wagner shouldn’t be the same as an excerpt by Mozart...Every note deserves its own sound!

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>More dynamics</td>
<td>Brilliant, full, focused, rounded, clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Joe Alessi, Jürgen van Rijen, Stefan Schulz, Michael Mulchahy, Jay Friedman, Himself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>More legato</td>
<td>Brilliant, full, resonant, mellow, rounded, clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jacques Mauger, Niels-ole Johansen, Michel Becquet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>More legato</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jaw, Air</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>More legato</td>
<td>Dark, full resonant, focused, rounded, clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Randy Hawes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>More legato</td>
<td>Dark, full, resonant, mellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>More legato</td>
<td>Dark, full, resonant, focused, rounded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>More legato</td>
<td>Dark, full, resonant, focused, rounded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Christian lindberg, ralph Sauer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>More legato</td>
<td>Dark, full, resonant, focused, rounded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>More tenuto</td>
<td>Mellow, rounded, unfocused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>More legato</td>
<td>Brilliant, full, focused, rounded, clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lindberg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>More legato</td>
<td>Dark, full, resonant, focused, rounded, clear</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Alessi, Christian Lindberg, Mark Fisher, Jay Friedman, Charles Vernon, Joseph Rodriguez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>More legato</td>
<td>Dark, full, resonant, focused, rounded, clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ben Van Dijk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Please describe the vibrato you prefer:</td>
<td>Briefly describe the sound of the vibrato:</td>
<td>Can you compare your preferred style of vibrato to that of a typical American trombonist? Comments?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jaw, Air, Narrow (in terms of pitch)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Jaw, Air</td>
<td>All are acceptable – it depends</td>
<td>I don’t know the &quot;typical&quot; american style. I think it is a prejudice, that American trombonist are using only one typical style (slide vibrato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Jaw, Air</td>
<td>All are acceptable – it depends</td>
<td>I don’t know the &quot;typical&quot; american style. I think it is a prejudice, that American trombonist are using only one typical style (slide vibrato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Jaw</td>
<td>Depends on register – vibrato like singers</td>
<td>e. g.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Air</td>
<td>Slow</td>
<td>I don’t really know the American style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>In my playing, I apply both techniques so they contribute to the same desired result without having to go overboard on one or the other. I cannot stand slide vibrato. I cannot select from the options above as every piece is different thus needs a different interpretation.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>You can't pry my Bach 42BO from my hands (bought in 1997). This was the last batch of good horns they made before merging with UMI (though they seem to be turning that around lately). My horn just let me play multiple styles well, from warm and resonant to bright and strident. The only other horns I have even thought about other options are the Yamaha YSL 882-OR and the Schilke ST 20.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Jaw</td>
<td>Slow</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Slide</td>
<td>Narrow (in terms of pitch)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Air</td>
<td>slow, narrow (in terms of pitch)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Jaw</td>
<td>Varies with each piece</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Air</td>
<td>Fast, narrow (in terms of pitch)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Slide</td>
<td>Slow, wide (in terms of pitch)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Jaw</td>
<td>Fast, wide (in terms of pitch)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Jaw, Air</td>
<td>Slow, it depends on the piece</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Slide</td>
<td>Slow, narrow (in terms of pitch)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Madeira 37
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Air</th>
<th>Fast, narrow (in terms of pitch)</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Bach Stradivarius 36</th>
<th>Yamaha 48</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Slide</td>
<td>Slow</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>King. King was my first trombone I ever played on and I still do to this day.</td>
<td>Not fully sure about the brand but it is a 16c size.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Slide</td>
<td>Slow, narrow (in terms of pitch)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Bach</td>
<td>I prefer a 1½ because I play bass trombone, but on a tenor trombone I prefer a 12. I don't know the brands</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bibliography**


