Exploring Trumpet Ensemble: Quality, Repertoire, and Cohesion
A Performance-based Research Project

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Abstract

This project offered students the knowledge, experience, and ability to practice and perform music on a professional level. It succeeded in the development of players’ skills and exposure to relevant repertoire. The goal of this project was to rehearse, perform, and study musical literature of a professional quality for the advancement of skills and the entertainment of an audience as well as understanding the chemistry that is a part of small ensemble cohesion. This type of ensemble has only recently been active at Angelo State University but is poised to bring greater attention to both the arts and the University.

A major goal was to perform locally in a variety of venues as well as take part in the West Chester University (PA) International Annual Trumpet Festival in February, 2018. These performances reflected highly on the program and demonstrated what the group was able to accomplish. The participants were music majors on the trumpet and used the skills they gained from this project for their future career enhancement. The opportunity to work with other professionals in the discipline was a definite boon to further both ensemble and individual skills. Another aim of this project was to spread the art we all enjoy to the campus as well as to a wider field of other university music programs and beyond.

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The Project: Preparation and Rehearsal

The ensemble performed different genres of music for trumpet ensemble, incorporating music from composers of the past and present. They delved into the historical, theoretical, and stylistic essence of each piece. This ensemble also explored advanced concepts necessary for the cohesion of a small ensemble.

The goal was to be able to perform in an ensemble at a professional level so as to gain experience as a performer and ensemble member. This experience allowed a better understanding of the process so that each member will be better able to teach it one day.

In order to complete this project, members must not only rehearse together as an ensemble, but also practice individually. The full ensemble met two times a week. The plan was to utilize a high definition recorder so as to record the ensemble with pro-level audio and video recordings for study purposes. This helped the ensemble improve in sound and function as a group. For example, early in the Fall 2017 semester, the ensemble recorded “St. Louis Blues” (W.C. Handy, 1914) to submit to the San Angelo Blues Society for consideration of their scholarship requests. The act of recording and listening back to “St. Louis Blues” was exactly in line with the group’s stated goals for study and improvement. Incidentally, the recording must have been a success as all five members of the ensemble received sizeable scholarship awards.
There was also a need to purchase an engaging repertoire of sheet music. Our goal for this project was to explore all best practices of how to perform in a trumpet ensemble at a very high level, and to understand the steps necessary for any small ensemble to reach this point.

This project was important because it provided an opportunity to learn more about music, playing the trumpet, and working as a team with other people who are trying to achieve the same goals. This project also helped each member realize the important points to take away regarding their future as a teacher. Preparations in this project included finding repertoire that the group has never played before and working together as a team to achieve a cohesive, expressive, and professional group sound. Each student had the same role, which was to learn each individual’s part to add positively to the whole ensemble.

The ensemble also focused on performing different genres of music for trumpet quartet. Music from composers of the past and present were performed. Study and discussion into the historical, theoretical, and stylistic essence of each piece was also covered. The goal was to perform this music at a professional level so as to gain experience and a better understanding of the process so he will be able to teach it one day.

This project proved to be important because it was an invaluable opportunity to learn more about music, playing the trumpet, and working as a team. This project also benefitted each member by refining rehearsal and performance techniques—skills that will help prepare them to better impart these concepts to their future colleagues and students.

A video compilation made at the end of the Spring semester chronicled the group’s progress as they progressively gained experience and knowledge of ensemble performance; footage from a variety of performances and master classes in which they participated was also featured.
The Project: Performance and Travel

Once the repertoire had been chosen, prepared for reading, and rehearsed, the group’s first outing was to prepare a blues piece for recording as previously mentioned. The first true test of their group preparation was a full concert featuring a wide range of repertoire for trumpet ensemble. The concert entitled, “The Dynamics of Force,” showcased the stated objectives the group set out to master. Working on group intonation, attacks and releases, consistent style, and a cohesive ensemble, the concert presented a variety of challenges that the group was prepared to undertake. Highlights of the performance were two recent major works for five trumpets that were inspired by the power of nature. *Cyclone* (Erick Morales, 2008) and *Centrifuge* (Jason Dovel, 2011) depicted through music the awesome but destructive force that can be unleashed—either from nature or from man. The concert also paid tribute to the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther’s posting of his 95 Theses on the Wittenberg Castle Church door. Along with Luther’s popular chorale tune, “A Mighty Fortress is Our God,” the group performed the beautiful motet “Sicut Cervus” (based on Psalm 42) by the Late Renaissance master, Giovanni Pierluigi Palestrina. These two religious works were good examples of the power of faith—yet another facet of “The Dynamics of Force.”

(The ASU Trumpet Ensemble, Fall 2017)
As a further demonstration of upper level musicianship, two senior members of the group were asked to compose an additional melody to a Luther’s chorale tune “A Mighty Fortress is Our God.” Students Brandon Batten and William DeForest composed a descant melody and performed their own new melody along with the other four members who played the standard 4-part chorale tune.

The ensemble was generous in their time devoted to community service. The students performed twice at long term care facilities as part of the San Angelo Symphony Orchestra’s “Music and Wellness” program. Performing outside the campus further solidified one of the project’s pillars, that of cohesion. Working as a team to prepare repertoire appropriate for these venues and the logistics of travel helped add to the camaraderie the group embraced.
Playing on the national stage was next on the agenda. Through special invitation to perform, in late January, 2018, the ASU Trumpet Ensemble traveled to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma to be a part of the first Regional Conference of the International Trumpet Guild (ITG). Along with attending master classes, clinics, and concerts, the students were featured on the concert comprised solely of trumpet ensembles. Their performance of Ice Journey (Jason Basoco, 2008) was well received judging by the many positive comments received.

(Performing at the ITG Regional Conference, Oklahoma City, OK)

The travel component of the Undergraduate Faculty-Mentored Academic Grant brought the group to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania area in February, 2018. Again, by invitation to perform, the ensemble attended the West Chester University of Pennsylvania (WCUPA) International Annual Trumpet Festival on February 23-24. A wealth of clinics, concerts, and master classes were offered and the group took part in all of them. They performed Basoco’s Ice Journey as a featured ensemble prior to the final afternoon clinic on February 24. In addition to the activities at WCUPA, the group was able to see much of the historic part of Philadelphia and experience some of the food and culture unique to the area.

The trip also furthered the group’s bonding as weather and mechanical issues delayed every flight on which they were scheduled. Starting with departure from San Angelo’s Mathis Field, they were re-routed to fly out of San Antonio the following day. Upon return back to Texas, their original flight from Philadelphia was re-routed to Charlotte, NC and then finally back to San Antonio the following day. A short drive back to San Angelo completed a successful travel component.
Back at home and preparing for the Spring 2018 featured performance, the ensemble was busy learning new repertoire. Scheduled on March 25, 2018, the concert, “ASU Trumpet Ensemble and Friends” highlighted, not only the host ASU ensemble, but a special performance by the Lone Star State Trumpet Guild (an affiliate chapter of the ITG), an ensemble of area high school directors who play trumpet, and a specially-selected group of talented high school trumpet players from the region.
A wide variety of music was prepared and the group focused on their primary tasks of ensuring quality of performance, an engaging repertoire, and cohesion in all aspects of performance. Repertoire included four new pieces ranging from early jazz to contemporary. These new works continued to push the group to reinforce fundamentals of trumpet performance as well as ensemble details.

The ASU ensemble also performed one piece with the high school ensemble. All forces joined in on the grand, massed finale, a special arrangement of the final section of Ottorino Respighi’s The Pines of Rome. One work on that program that needs special mention is a piece performed by the Lone Star State Trumpet Guild. It was composed by Dr. Bernie Scherr, Head of the Department of Music Theory and Composition and professor of music theory and composition at Hardin-Simmons University. Scherr, also a trumpet player, wrote the pieces for the Lone Star State ensemble’s participation at the 43rd Annual ITG Conference to be held in San Antonio, May 29-June 2, 2018. “Just Stand Up and Play” (2017) is a short, rhythmically-active work for five trumpets. The ASU Trumpet Ensemble will join the Lone Star State Trumpet Guild at that prestigious ITG conference performance. This collaboration will be discussed later.
The ASU Trumpet Ensemble quickly re-grouped to prepare for their next performance, again working on new material. In collaboration with the ASU Percussion Ensemble, and the ASU Low Brass Ensemble, the trumpets worked on two very modern pieces of the repertoire. One, *Corners*, also by Bernie Scherr (2011), is unique in that the performance requires the musicians to stand back-to-back facing the four corners of the performing space. No conductor was needed, so the group rehearsed independently to get ready for this demanding work. *Lumen*, Frederick Speck (1994) is a piece for five trumpets that is based on the …“color resonance and lyricism of the trumpet ensemble. The title, which refers to the essential quality of light, is connected to this work as a metaphor for the diffusion of sound as light.” —F. Speck.

Joining the trumpet ensemble on the day of the concert was Bert Truax, trumpeter, Dallas Symphony Orchestra (ret.) and the Philadelphia Orchestra. He presented a master class for the students covering a rich assortment of fundamental practices for successful brass playing. The title of his talk, “Sometime the magic works…...and sometimes it doesn’t,” addressed the ins and outs of a typical brass player’s daily encounter with the instrument.

The concert also saw the group perform with the Low Brass and Percussion ensembles. Joining forces with two other ensembles allowed the trumpets to experience being part of a larger ensemble and focus awareness on how their parts fit into the greater whole. Both combined works were more commercial in nature which allowed the members to concentrate on jazz styles, articulations, attacks, and section blend.
The culmination of research for this project was the Undergraduate Research Symposium held on April 20. Along with dozens of other students’ research findings displayed, the ASU Trumpet Ensemble featured a poster board with bulleted summaries of their research, two photos, other pertinent information, as well as a 22-minute video of the group’s activities throughout the year. The ensemble also performed four selections during the Symposium for the entire gathering.
In February, the ASU Trumpet Ensemble received an exceptional opportunity to perform for a world-class trumpet organization. After submitting a recording of *Ice Journey* to the prestigious ITG for consideration to perform at the Guild’s annual conference in late May, 2018, they were accepted and invited to perform. The group was scheduled to be included in one of the many prelude performances that precede each of the conference’s main events. Additionally, the ASU trumpets will augment the Lone Star State Trumpet Guild in their performance at the annual ITG conference performing Bernie Scherr’s “Just Stand Up and Play” to an international audience. With these two high-profile performances, the ASU Trumpet Ensemble will reach a far-wider cross-section of the trumpet world in their performances. This experience caps off a year-long pursuit of great repertoire, high-quality preparation, and cohesion in our research, preparation, and performance.

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The Project: Research Findings

Below are the findings from each of the members’ research. They divided up the content into four parts:

- Cohesion in the trumpet ensemble
- Rehearsal techniques used in the trumpet ensemble
- Repertoire used in the trumpet ensemble
- Trumpets and accessories in trumpet ensemble

Frequent discussion with their mentor helped focus their research. Often in rehearsal, the ensemble was asked to take note and/or identify which of the primary goals of this project were being performed. The group was quick to take note of these crucial aspects and work towards improvement. As a result of this heightened awareness, the group continued to improve in a variety of techniques that directly resulted in excellent performances and successful recordings.

- **Cohesion in the Trumpet Ensemble** [Brandon Batten]

  The term *cohesion* can be defined as the action or fact of forming a united whole. In trumpet ensemble our goal is just as such, to achieve a uniform characteristic sound at a professional level. However, there are many components involved in a cohesive performing ensemble, this paper will highlight and elaborate on these many facets.

  In musical performances, there is almost always no verbal communication of any sort between ensemble members. Therefore, members must achieve effective communication through effective understanding of the rhythmic values, the execution of ensemble members’ precise intonation, as well as the ensemble releasing together. Starting and ending phrases together, in addition to starting notes and phrases together, is paramount to successful execution of any given work. This paper will also elaborate on how the ensemble handles conductorless performing, body language, knowledge of each performer’s individual part as well as that of their peers. Its focus will also include chord intonation, alignment of multiple tonguing, performing various genres and styles, various musical concepts, along with the crucial facet to cohesion in the small ensemble—our understanding of each other on a personal level outside of rehearsal time.
In small ensembles, it is very common for the group to perform without a conductor. There are many factors to performing in this manner. Firstly, the ensemble must decide who will begin the piece; it will typically be the first person to play. Since it is more appropriate in most literature outside of jazz to begin pieces without a verbal countoff, the player beginning the piece must ensure the members are ready to perform by making eye contact and issuing a breath with a visible downward bob of the head and trumpet to signify the point of entry for the ensemble. In conductorless performing, members must also rely on each other’s ability to remain rhythmically precise, as well as be aware of who has moving lines in the music, and to follow the desired tempo. Another issue in conductorless performance is when the tempo of the music speeds up or slows down. The ensemble member who has the prevailing melodic line will typically control the tempo change in which all members must follow. Lastly, apart from starting pieces, is the concentration on releases in the music—when the ensemble stops performing together. Releases are normally signified with an agreed upon form of release, whether it be a small single swirl of the trumpet’s bell or an upward bob of the head at the conclusion of the final note in the phrase or piece.

One of the most important facets to a small ensemble having a cohesive sound would be the sound quality being produced by the ensemble’s members. Each performer must have a well-developed, mature, and appropriate sound concept on their instrument. In our case we must be able to play our trumpets with the best mature sound quality and intonation possible, so that our sounds may blend together in a conducive manner. This facet is best refined individually but we have participated in some long tone and tone building exercises as a group to ensure our sound is as round, stable, and overall enjoyable to listen to as possible.

Another major component that lends to efficient cohesion in an ensemble is the understanding of the ensemble member’s body language, as well as an understanding of one another outside of rehearsal. It is key for each member to be aware of the body language of their peers, as it may signify things such as, changing tempi, desired style, error adjustment, and efficacy of intense or passionate sections in the music. The personal knowledge of each member also lends to the success of the ensemble due to the fact that everyone will be more comfortable standing next to their peers. One will also be able to understand where the member may want to take a musical phrase or idea, or even what particular style the member will begin the next phrase based on cues provided in their body language. These cues might include being more fluid in the movement of the body, the dipping at the knees to signify locking into a tricky rhythm or section that is hard to align, relaxed facial features in a relaxed or passionate moment in the music, or a more rigid, focused posture for figures that are challenging or intricate.

Many things must happen in the execution of the repertoire to ensure a cohesive sound for the ensemble. For example, if a piece originates in the Baroque era, (1600-1750) the ensemble must adopt a pointed bounce to the way notes and phrases are played, and each ensemble member must share a similar sound to their peers. This contrasts to repertoire performed in the jazz idiom, where it is necessary to adopt a more “laid back” approach to articulation and style, with each member needing to be aware of the specific style of swing in the ensemble. This can most effectively be determined by listening to the “snap” the lead player gives rhythmic swung figures. Another example of ensemble members needing to match styles would be when one member of the ensemble begins a new idea, it is expected for ensemble members to match the style the originating member introduced and matching that style upon introducing a new musical idea.

Our ensemble even delved into extended technique, such as incorporating Baroque era percussion instruments, various mutes, and the removal of slides while playing to introduce
variations to the sound. It was up to the ensemble members to listen effectively and again, match the style of our peers by ensuring a unified sound while playing with mutes in our trumpets. One way we helped to ensure this was to have the same model of mute, so that the desired unison effect was achieved.

One large aspect of a small ensemble having a cohesive sound would be what the ensemble envisions for a piece of music. This entails defining specific sounds, colors, styles, imagery and end goals we have for a specific piece of music. We commonly discussed how a certain member would be approaching a certain part in the music, and through this discussion we would help gain a more similar sound that would be an agreed upon target sound for the group. One way our sound goal for specific pieces was achieved was to pay explicit attention to the phrases, or musical sentences, and determine the appropriate shape the phrase should have, by following either what the composer set forth, or what the group decides would sound best for a specific piece.

Another area our ensemble focused with great detail was our capacity to perform complex rhythmic figures such as staggered entrances on off beats, as well as quickly repeated figures in fast moving sixteenth notes. When these sections occurred, the ensemble had to assure execution of the beginning and end of the notes was concurrent with the rest of the ensemble, despite the music moving at heightened tempi. Inversely, the trumpet ensemble also performed pieces that were slower and more lyrical, giving us an opportunity to focus on concepts like the “sound pyramid” concept—balancing to lower part players so that the upper part may be heard effectively. One way this is achieved is through ensuring the lower part players phrase their musical lines at a softer dynamic so that the lush harmonies are heard underneath, but the melodic line can still be heard soaring above the established harmonies.

Furthermore, ensemble members were expected to fully master their individual part so they may execute it flawlessly. In turn, ensemble members were able to listen to things happen in the other parts, so that they may begin to contextualize their own part within the overall picture. This is a major component to the ensemble reaching an effective level of professionalism and cohesion.

Finally, the ensemble members’ understanding of chord structures, tuning tendencies, and balance lend some of the most crucial factors into the elements of cohesion. Ensemble members were expected to tune chords so that moments in the music may sound their best. However, there are many different adjustments performers must make depending on what quality the chord is. Figure 1 (p. 13) is a graphic of tuning tendencies for each prominent type of chord. In the many types of harmonies these chords represent on the chart, knowing which note in any chord one must play means one must also adjust the pitch accordingly to make the entire chord sound in tune. In executing music at a very high level, performers must be precise in balancing their sound with the other ensemble members. To do this, performers must follow the “sound pyramid” concept, in which players on lower parts must ensure they are playing at a louder volume proportional to the volume upper part players are performing, so that the lower texture may be heard clearly.

This paper has highlighted some ways in which the ASU Trumpet Ensemble was able to obtain a more cohesive sound at a heightened professional level and offered some insight into how a small ensemble might approach being a unified whole in their efforts to achieve a high performance standard.
During the academic year 2017-18, the trumpet ensemble rehearsed two times per week, each an hour long. Each rehearsal consisted of many techniques that helped us gain knowledge and experience in our ensemble. At performance time, the diligent work spent on those techniques resulted in a successful performance.

During rehearsals, the group often isolated individual chords to hear how they related to the harmony incorporated in the work. This allowed the members to identify the chord quality and tune notes that needed to be adjusted to make the chord(s) sound correct. This helped the overall effect of the piece by allowing the players to hear how each chord functioned within the music. As an example, this chord work was very helpful in one of our pieces called Ice Journey (Jason Basoco, 2008). In Ice Journey there was a passage that required extra attention because the harmony featured some contemporary, less common chords. A rehearsal technique used to perfect the tuning was to play a part one note at a time, from the bottom up, and pay very close attention to tuning tendencies of just intonation. Once this was solid and the intonation settled, the piece took on a much more polished and professional quality.
Discovering background parts and melodies and how they interact with each other is also very important when it comes to our rehearsals. There were times when one, two, or three people were playing the melody, requiring keen attention to the other parts. In terms of background roles, the most important thing to do was provide the melody a solid foundation by supporting that line. Other parts would also add more color and feeling to the music as a whole. Discovering and emphasizing the roles of the melody and background are very important in every piece, notably in a Cuban work by Beatriz Cordona, *Dos Tiempos*. This piece is in two movements, each with its own style. These two movements had the melody featured in different members’ parts, particularly in the first movement. One very important spot in the first movement was when the same melody was passed around the ensemble while the same background figure was played underneath. This background figure was not only the motor of this section, but it was also a key color contributor as explained by one of the members of USAF Band of the West, Gateway Brass, A1C Michael Steiger. Our technique was to be able to express and exaggerate the melody with also having the background voices figuring prominently to give this piece a beautiful sound. In the second movement, there was a particular section in which three players had the melody in different parts of the chord with an accompanied bass line in the background part. Not only did the melody line have to have great color, but it also had to line up rhythmically. The technique used to achieve this was to sing the rhythm first and then play it with a good balance and sense of rhythm. The technique was very effective as we were able to play in time with each other resulting in a well-played piece. The idea of melody and background voices are very significant in all our pieces, but rehearsing it is what helps to bring out the color in order to produce a successful performance.

Furthermore, when it comes to balance, lower voices need to be heard more than the upper voices since higher pitches (especially in a trumpet ensemble) will be easier to decipher. This means that instruments such as flugelhorns need to play out slightly in order to have the rich, dark tone be heard. On the other end of the spectrum, piccolo trumpet, E-flat and B-flat trumpets will generally be on the brighter side. In terms of a rehearsal setting, we put balance into action by trying to not play over each other, being more knowledgeable of where the melody is, and focusing on the center of each player’s trumpet sound to create the most desirable quality. One favored way that we grasped the idea of tonal center was by doing a series of exercises based on the James Stamp Method. These exercises helped our balance because they afforded us the ability to find the core of the sound and make each player aware of intonation across the ensemble.

The one technique that always has to be employed is listening. Listening in every way possible is what keeps the group’s balance locked in. The idea of listening is very crucial in terms of balance because it is what keeps us aware of where the melody is, which part needs to be brought out, and how do we use balance to create our sound. Balance is vital in the trumpet ensemble because it’s what allows our pieces to sound amazing.

One of our major goals in every rehearsal is learning how to play as a small ensemble. Just like any kind of ensemble, everyone needs to know their part individually. However, in a small ensemble there is little room for error, with many times there being one on a part and different exposed melodies and figures being spread across the whole ensemble. In practice, this requires listening across parts, matching articulation, and learning each other’s visual cues. For instance, during sustained chords or at the end of pieces with no conductor we must rely on each other to release together. For example, a piece that we played in the Fall 2017 semester, *Galliard Battaglia* (S. Scheidt, arr. C. Blümel), we used this technique in rehearsal because there was no conductor with this piece. We had to be able to feel the tempo by moving with the melody and
seeing any body movements that would help us at the start of the piece, the next phrase, or at the very end on a long final note. Eye contact, body movement, and breathing are techniques that we practiced at all times in the trumpet ensemble. Even with a conductor, these techniques are very important to employ because they help us to not only communicate, but to also make sure everything lines up.

Alternatively, for the jazz pieces that we played this year, there was a different approach to how we would rehearse them. We would incorporate the “swing” style of jazz by using the “dah” attack to begin the notes. There were solos in all of our jazz pieces, so it really gave each member an opportunity to listen to each other’s interpretations of swing. We rehearsed these solo sections frequently because we wanted to make sure that we all had that sense of a good swing style. For example, this spring semester we played a jazz piece called “Cornet Chop Suey” (Louis Armstrong, 1923) which had inserts that incorporated solo passages based on the main melody. These inserts had solos that were all the same notewise, so in turn we rehearsed this part of the piece many times because it allowed us to listen to and interpret each other’s sense of swing. Another way that we approached our jazz pieces was by improvising with a certain blues scale. We would either rehearse by playing quarter note chords or by a backing track. In “St. Louis Blues” (W.C. Handy, 1914) and “Trumpet Madness” (Sonny Rollins, 1956), we used both of these techniques as they are great for the soloist to improvise on the trumpet. It also gave us a chance to learn the chord progression and how it correlates with the blues scale. For all of our jazz tunes, it was vital that we rehearsed using these techniques because it helped us grasp an appropriate sense of style and, most importantly, a strong communication with the audience.

In summary, all these techniques have allowed us to present many successful performances with great comments from the audience. Every single rehearsal has given us valuable knowledge on how to prepare a piece. Everything learned through this process has not only made us a successful ensemble, but it has also helped us to realize the amount of cooperation and hard work that it takes to be in an ensemble.

(Ready to go on stage at the ITG Regional Conference, Oklahoma City, OK)
Repertoire Used in the Trumpet Ensemble [Riley Jarabek]

The repertoire used in a trumpet ensemble comes from a very large variety of different genres. Although there is a limited amount of music written specifically for five or four trumpets, the ensemble has successfully performed various concerts featuring a vast array of music over the 2017-2018 school year. The Trumpet Ensemble has played pieces such as Galliard Battaglia, Cyclone, A Mighty Fortress is Our God, Sicut Cervus (Psalm 42), St. Louis Blues, Within Sacred Walls, Song of the Lark, Nocturne from “Midsummer Night’s Dream”, Trumpet Madness, Centrifuge, Ice Journey, Dos Tiempos, Bugler’s Holiday, Lumen, Sinfonia, Cornet Chop Suey, Fiesta Latina, Corners, and Pines of Rome.

Galliard Battaglia by Samuel Scheidt (1587-1654) (arr. C. Blümel) was originally written for five brass instruments in 1621 and adapted for five trumpets featuring two piccolo trumpets with three B-flat trumpets. Galliard Battaglia is the third movement from a multi-movement brass quintet titled Battle Suite. The galliard is a lively and energetic court dance in a triple meter filled with vigorous hopping and kicking.

Erik Morales (b. 1966), is a trumpet player and well known composer of band, orchestra, jazz and trumpet ensemble literature. The ensemble was very fortunate to learn and perform two contrasting pieces of his, Cyclone and Within Sacred Walls. Cyclone, written in 2007, is a menacing but luscious composition. Morales writes this inscription: “dedicated to all those who had to endure many hardships during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The piece depicts the thoughts and emotions of those who are forced to endure a hurricane.” Cyclone is filled with fierce intensity and calming beauty, from the devastating formation and destruction of a hurricane to the calm beauty of the eye of the storm. Within Sacred Walls, a contemporary lyrical piece based off of ancient Gregorian chant, was written in 2011 for six B-flat trumpets and was commissioned for the thirty-fifth anniversary of the International Trumpet Guild (ITG). Since the piece was written for six Bb trumpets, this gave our quintet the chance to become a sextet with the addition of our very own trumpet professor, Dr. John Irish, to play alongside us.

A Mighty Fortress is Our God by Martin Luther (1483-1546) (arr. G.E. Holmes) is one of Martin Luther’s most well known chorale tunes. Martin Luther, one of the most influential and controversial figures in Christian history, was a German monk who began the Protestant reformation in sixteenth century Europe. A Mighty Fortress is Our God was a religious hymn based off of Psalm 46. The hymn was written between 1527 and 1529 in recognition and celebration to God’s almighty power over all earthly and spiritual forces. The hymn became very popular throughout Reformed Europe. Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1526-1594) was a famous sixteenth century composer who also was a representative for the Roman School of Music Composition. Palestrina had a great influence in the development of Catholic church music and was well known for his sacred music. Sicut Cervus is based on Psalm 42 and was originally a famous motet written for four voices in 1584. A motet is polyphonic choral composition based on a sacred text. Dr. Irish arranged his own version of Sicut Cervus (Psalm 42) for four B-flat trumpets.

W.C. Handy (1873-1958) is a former trumpet player, teacher, band leader, and composer from Alabama known for his contributions to jazz and blues music. In 1914 he released one of the first ever blues hits, “St. Louis Blues.” This song was inspired by a woman Handy had met in St. Louis, Missouri who was heartbroken or “blue” over the absence of her husband. Bill Holcombe (1924-2010), noted American composer, arranger, and founder of Musicians Publications, arranged a fantastic arrangement of “St. Louis Blues” for four trumpets in B-flat with optional rhythm section. “Trumpet Madness” is actually a jazz tune from 1956 made
famous by Sonny Rollins and John Coltrane titled “Tenor Madness.” John Coltrane is one of the greatest tenor sax players and has remained a jazz icon since his prime; “Tenor Madness” was just one of his hits. Although “Tenor Madness” was originally written for a jazz quintet (piano, bass guitar, drums, and two tenor saxes), “Trumpet Madness” was arranged by Dr. Irish for a trumpet quintet. Trumpet Madness was performed with a pre-recorded rhythm section. Both of these two jazz pieces also called for exposed improvisation solos.

“Song of the Lark” and “Nocturne” from Midsummer Night’s Dream both written by Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) and arranged for trumpet quartet by G.E. Holmes, were two condensed arrangements of a larger work. “Song of the Lark” was originally written for the choir (SATB), condensed for four trumpets in Bb. “Nocturne” from Midsummer Night’s Dream is actually the famous French horn soli harmonized into four parts, performed with two Flugelhorns and two B-flat trumpets.

Centrifuge by Jason Dovel is another fellow trumpet player, composer, and professor at The University of Kentucky. A centrifuge is a machine that spins at very high speeds to separate compounds. Jason Dovel’s exhilarating new composition starts with pitch bends and parts of the trumpet taken out for a very creative and mysterious effect that soon leads into a very high energy section full of double tonguing and hits with tension rising throughout the ensemble. Centrifuge has a stunning lyrical section resolving all of the former tension into a moment of pure bliss and beauty. The lyrical section integrates the use of flugelhorns for an added texture across the group. The piece closes with a high demanding section described on the music itself as “blazing,” full of high intensity runs and rapid triplets against double tonguing. The world premier of Centrifuge was in 2014 by the University of Kentucky “Shades of Blue” Trumpet Ensemble.

Ice Journey by Jason Basoco, written for four trumpets in 2008, was an adventure for the Trumpet Ensemble. Basoco’s Ice Journey is a high energy piece with several time changes, highly contrasting dynamics, and several dissonant chords. The group had the opportunity to travel to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and West Chester, Philadelphia to perform Ice Journey at an ITG regional conference and a trumpet festival.

Dos Tiempos by Beatriz Cordona (arr. James Ackley) is a two movement trumpet quartet. The first movement is a slow and beautiful ballad featuring a solo moving from part to part with a driving background leading to a climactic ending that dies down to nothing. The second movement is quite the opposite. It is a short very high energy and very syncopated piece. The first and second movements are highly contrasting to each other, creating a remarkable combination.

Bugler’s Holiday by Leroy Anderson (1908-1975) is one of the most well known trumpet trios ever written. Bugler’s Holiday was finished in 1954 when it was originally written for trumpet trio and orchestra. It has now been arranged for several different types of ensembles. The Trumpet Ensemble performed a special arrangement of Bugler’s Holiday by Charles Metzger for four trumpets. Anderson’s original called for three B-flat trumpets and orchestra; Metzger’s arrangement calls for one E-flat trumpet, two B-flat trumpets, and one flugelhorn. The E-flat and two B-flat trumpets were scored to perform the well known melody while the flugelhorn would play parts significant to the orchestras parts.

The Oxford Dictionary defines lumen as: “The SI [international symbol] unit of luminous flux, equal to the amount of light emitted per second in a unit solid angle of one steradian from a uniform source of one candela.” Frederick Speck, Director of Bands at University of Louisville, wrote Lumen for five B-flat trumpets in 1994 for the University of Louisville trumpet professor, Dr. Michael Tunnell. The quote in the beginning of the paragraph simply states what Lumen
means, and Speck’s piece reflects all of that into five trumpets. *Lumen* is a beautiful and rich piece of music that shares several different shades of light, with several dissonant chords and random interjections from all five players resulting in a fantastic piece of art. While we were learning this piece at ASU, we would listen to certain parts with our eyes closed and would try to see what shade of light was trying to be portrayed by the music, and as the composer states: “envision the diffusion of light as sound.”

Adriano Banchieri (1568-1634) was a musician, composer, poet and Italian monk of the late Renaissance and the beginning of the Baroque era. *Sinfonia* was originally written for a string quartet in 1607 but Dr. John Irish of Angelo State University arranged his own version for four B-flat trumpets, piccolo trumpet and optional percussion. *Sinfonia* starts out as a beautiful flowing piece that builds into a lively, triple-meter section. The four members of the trumpet ensemble switched from instrumentalist to percussionists and took to the tambourine, finger cymbals, triangle, and a single tom drum to create a small percussion ensemble. The percussion break changed the pace for the piece turning it from a beautiful, flowing line to a fast dance-like feel. After the percussion break, the trumpet ensemble moved back to trumpets as the fast dance feel was kept. The fast-moving section transitioned directly back into the piece’s original slow and flowing melody which moved to a full, resolved ending.

Louis “Satchmo” Armstrong is one of music’s most valued contributors. Louis was born in 1901 in New Orleans, Louisiana where he soon became involved with music and eventually became one of the greatest trumpet players and singers known to the world. His contributions to jazz will never be forgotten. “Cornet Chop Suey” was originally premiered in 1926 by Louis Armstrong and his jazz quintet. This fast and high swinging solo showed his talent for swinging hard and fast. Arranger Mike Vax, took “Cornet Chop Suey” and harmonized it for four trumpets and a rhythm section.

*Fiesta Latina* arr. by Lalo Davila is actually a piece written strictly for percussion ensemble. The ASU Trumpet Ensemble and Low Brass Ensemble were both invited to join our Percussion Ensemble to augment them on this exciting Latin piece. The trumpets used C trumpets so as to play exactly what the keyboards are playing without having to transpose. Two trumpets played a “Xylo/Lead Pan” part and two played a “Vibraphone” part. The low brass had bass parts written specifically for them. *Fiesta Latina* is a high energy, grooving piece that the audience definitely fed off; this piece will make anyone want to get up and dance!

*Corners* was commissioned by the West Texas Trumpet Works ensemble in 2011 and premiered in Abilene, Texas that year. Dr Bernie Scherr is Head of the Department of Music Theory and Composition/Professor of Music Theory and Composition at Hardin-Simmons University. A trumpet player himself, Scherr envisioned this work to be performed by four players, not in the usual performance setting of a single line in front of a conductor, but as each member standing back-to-back facing the four corners of the performance space. The incessant, driving rhythm is found in all parts with great care needed to insure the melodic line, when moving from part to part, is brought out. It is clear that all four members in the ensemble need to have a strict sense of time and placement for this piece to truly work. Performing without a conductor—and standing in an unusual set-up, provided challenges in performance, but were well worth the time and effort afforded this short piece.

*Pines of Rome* by Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936) is a four movement orchestral suite written in 1924. *Pines of Rome* is a four movement suite, similar to a symphony. In it, Respighi depicted pine trees located in different areas in the city of Rome at different times of the day. The fourth movement is titled “*Pini Della Via Appia*” which translates to Pines of the Appian Way. The Appian Way is an ancient Roman road running from Rome to Southern Italy. The
piece begins with an eerie quiet as one can imagine Roman Legions approaching Rome from afar. As these troops march closer to the city, the instruments grow in intensity as does the melodic and underlying lines. The well-known English Horn solo, transcribed for Flugelhorn, ushers in the more articulated style as the massive build up grows to the incredibly exciting ending. Dr. Irish took the full orchestra score and condensed it into nine trumpet parts with piano.

- **Trumpets and Accessories in Trumpet Ensemble** [William DeForest]

  In our trumpet ensemble, many different trumpets and techniques were used, instead of using the “all B-flat trumpet all the time” theory. The B-flat Trumpet was employed in most of our pieces, but there were other pieces that had a different style and required different sounds and timbres. For example, two piccolo trumpets were used for a Baroque, fanfare-like piece, and a flugelhorn for a more mellow piece. There were a variety of accessories in this concert as well, such as cup mutes, a Harmon mute without the stem, and the playing of a B-flat trumpet with the second valve slide taken out. All these things were incorporated to change the overall sound and effect of the ensemble.

  The trumpet that was exercised the most in the ensemble was the B-flat trumpet. It is the instrument that almost every beginner starts with, so everyone in the ensemble was the most comfortable with it. The timbre isn’t as bright as a C trumpet, but it is brighter than a flugelhorn, so it can play many different styles many ways. The B-flat trumpet is in the middle ground where a player can play orchestral pieces and create a bright sound, but then turn around and play in a wind ensemble and have a dark and rich tone.

  Another trumpet that was utilized in the concert was the piccolo trumpet. It was employed for two different pieces, both in the Baroque style. It was used primarily to gain the effect of a fanfare for a king or a queen. This horn is half the length of a normal B-flat trumpet, and most of the time has four valves, instead of three, to help in tuning and to gain extra range. The piccolo is pitched an octave higher than the B-flat trumpet and has a shallower mouthpiece to achieve the brighter tone. This helps give the piece an extra color, paired with the B-flat trumpets to create a full, sonorous quality.

  On the other side of the spectrum from the piccolo trumpet, the flugelhorn was also needed in our concert. The flugelhorn is shaped differently from the B-flat, having the wider and more conical bore. The flugelhorn is mainly used in jazz ensembles during ballads to create a mellow and dark tone. This instrument was utilized in this concert to convey the same idea, but the piece overall was supposed to be a more mellow tone. All B-flat trumpets wouldn’t give the ‘French Horn’ sound that was needed, so two of the ensemble members played flugelhorns.

  The last trumpet in the ensemble was the E-flat trumpet. The E-flat trumpet sounds a perfect fourth higher than the conventional B-flat trumpet. These trumpets are mainly used to perform concertos in a more finger friendly key.

  Along with the trumpets that were performed in our concerts, there were different accessories and techniques implemented in each piece. The first technique that was put into practice when performing *Centrifuge* (J Dovel, 2014) was the removing of the second valve slide while playing. The second valve slide is normally used to tune a pitch when the second valve is depressed or any combination with it. This work called for the removal of the slide, with the combination of a Harmon mute without the stem, to give the player the ability to play notes muted while not using the second valve. The second accessory that is mentioned above is the Harmon mute. These mutes produce a tinny, buzzy sound that can be manipulated by the hand
over the stem. *Centrifuge* called for the stem to be removed, which gives the mute a louder sound, and was still manipulated by the hand to create the “wah-wah” sound. The third accessory that was exercised was the cup mute. The cup mute creates a darker, subdued tone, which gave this piece a mysterious sound while also keeping a soft dynamic throughout the beginning section.

Overall, there were four types of trumpets and three different accessories/techniques utilized in this concert. Each of these items expanded the overall tone, dynamic, or timbre of the ensemble. The desired effect of the pieces would not have been conveyed if they were only played on B-flat trumpets and the common straight mutes. The different horns and accessories add another level and color to the pieces we performed.

**Summary**

What the students have gained in the past two semesters is invaluable. The research topics described above helped foster individual and collective growth in many ways. From the numerous performances, to the travel component, to musical growth, this project has certainly increased their knowledge and experience as musicians.

Demonstrable growth on the trumpet is another important benefit. Heightened ensemble skills is an asset that will benefit the members their entire musical career. The group discovered that, in the small trumpet ensemble, it is imperative that members place an emphasis on non-verbal communication in addition to achieving mature, developed sounds on their instrument. Much time was also spent matching the style of each ensemble member to the selected repertoire.

From researching the topics above, students furthermore gained a new body of knowledge. They worked on repertoire from five eras of music: the Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic, and Modern. Performing music from different eras of music throughout history allowed the ensemble to become more diverse in the differing styles of repertoire. Additionally, the ensemble utilized various types of trumpets and mutes to achieve different timbres, tone colors, moods, and effects. Sharing information from others in the ensemble enriched each member of vital scholarship pertaining to this project. Even preparing a poster presentation and its contents was another learning experience for the group. Skills, repertoire, and research gained and polished during this year will be of lasting benefit to all involved with this valuable project.

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Joseph Torres: “*What we learned this year in the trumpet ensemble has been both beneficial and rewarding. The grant that we received has allowed us to explore the performance aspects of the top tier of the trumpet world and in turn we have been able to incorporate those different aspects into our playing. The most rewarding part of this research was being able to see how our hard work and diligence has made us better musicians as a whole.*”

Riley Jarabek: “*I feel that travel is a very beneficial experience to encounter while growing up. Through this research project the Angelo State University trumpet ensemble was able to travel close and far from San Antonio to Oklahoma to Philadelphia. While traveling we were able to learn many great things from several fantastic musicians from across the country.*”
William DeForest: “This grant/research helped me become a better musician overall by giving me many opportunities to learn from professional trumpet performers. That, in turn, gave me more people to get in contact with if I want to perform with them, use them as a reference, or just someone to talk to and learn from.”

Brandon Batten: “My time in the faculty-mentored research grant afforded me the opportunity to travel and meet phenomenal musicians and educators that I would not have been exposed to otherwise. As an educator these opportunities have immensely helped expand my faculties as an educator, musician, and trumpet player.”
Sources of Research


