JUSTIN BLAND

NATURAL TRUMPET TIPS

BIM TP380

EDITIONS BIM

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Justin Bland

Applauded for his “gleaming, dancing trumpet” and “immaculate intonation” (*The Boston Globe*) as well as for his “dazzling virtuosity” (*Grunion Gazette*), the American trumpeter **Justin Bland** is a highly sought-after solo/principal Baroque trumpeter. As a highly sought-after solo/principal Baroque trumpeter deemed “most likely to win a gold medal, if music had Olympics” (*Boston Globe*), Dr. Bland has performed with several leading North American ensembles including American Bach Soloists, Apollo’s Fire, Bach Collegium San Diego, Boston Baroque, Handel and Haydn Society, Washington Bach Consort, and many others. He has also played in South America with Ensamble Barroco de Bogotá.

Now living in Denmark, Justin continues performing as both a soloist and ensemble musician, combining ongoing North American engagements with new collaborations with leading Baroque ensembles in Scandinavia and the rest of Europe. In Europe he has played Baroque trumpet with Arte dei Suonatori, Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, Croatian Baroque Ensemble, Händelfestspielorchester Halle, Göteborg Baroque, Les Arts Florissants, Wrocław Baroque Ensemble, and many more. He has also played Baroque trumpet with modern instrument ensembles including Camerata Lyckensis, Camerata Nordica, Esbjerg Ensemble, Kammerakademie Potsdam, and Karlskrona Kammarorkester.

Justin also plays recorder, and has performed on that instrument with ensembles including Croatian Baroque Ensemble, Enghave Barok, Finnish Baroque Orchestra, Göttinger Barockorchester, Nivalis Barokk, and Orkester Nord. Furthermore, Justin is also a countertenor and has sung with Apollo’s Fire and Opera Cleveland, among others.

Justin specializes in early music, most notably in difficult high-register music for Baroque trumpet; for example, he has played Bach’s Brandenburg Concerto No. 2 with groups in Canada, Colombia, Denmark, Germany, Portugal, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, and the USA (in 2021 he played it twelve times in five countries).

https://justinblandtrumpet.com

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Introduction

I wrote this guide to impart practical advice concerning practicing and performing on the natural trumpet. While the nomenclature has not officially been standardized, some players prefer to reserve the term *natural trumpet* for trumpets of fixed length, even when they can be crooked to other keys, capable of only producing notes of the harmonic series without any aids such as slides or keys[1]; such players, then, often use the term *Baroque trumpet* for instruments that follow the same general principal, but make use of one or more—most commonly three or four—vent holes in order to help correct the pitch of certain "out-of-tune" harmonics.[2] In this guide, the term *natural trumpet* should be understood to encompass both types of instruments.

Today there is considerable debate about the use of vent holes on natural trumpets. Some players have the opinion that playing without holes is the only proper way to perform natural trumpet literature when using historical instruments. Other players, alternatively, embrace the practicality of the vented natural trumpet, especially in regard to its security of intonation and pitch accuracy in an age of "perfect" recordings where sound engineers, conductors, audience remembers, and even colleagues—many of whom have absolutely no idea how it feels to play natural trumpets without (or even with!) holes—expect (near) perfection. Intriguingly, it seems, at least from my personal experience, that the debate surrounding authenticity in connection with vent hole usage receives a considerably higher focus than authenticity issues on other historical instruments. For example, I have noticed a number of Baroque and Classical violin players playing with modern-style shoulder rests even though the modern shoulder rest seems to have been first mentioned/invented in the 20th century, yet I have not heard much discussion about this. Another example is the nearly ubiquitous use of electricity with organs used for early music despite the fact that electricity was not applied to organs until the turn of the 19th century, an issue that is extremely rarely addressed today.

While I often, yet not always, perform on natural trumpets with vent holes due to considerations of pragmatism, I wrote this guide with the goal of helping players of both vented and non-vented trumpets. For players using vented instruments, I believe it is important to understand how non-vented instruments respond while being played; this understanding should then be used as a model when practicing and performing on vented instruments. When discovering the feeling of playing without holes, one can use an instrument built with holes and either cover the holes or replace the vent-hole yard with a no-hole yard. While this approach will undoubtedly will help the player build security on such instruments, when attempting the get a more general sense of playing without holes, it would, if practical, be preferable to utilize an instrument specifically intended to be played without holes since genuine no-hole instruments often respond a bit differently than their vented counterparts.

In this guide, I discuss my thoughts on warming up, articulating, trilling, and practicing on different crooks on the natural trumpet. While I include some of my own exercises, there are already an overwhelming number of exercises for the natural trumpet in both historical methods and treatises as well as in modern texts; therefore, I hope this guide will help trumpeters better understand ways to practice such exercises to improve their playing. Of the resources referenced in this guide, surely the most significant is François Georges Auguste Dauverné's *Méthode pour la trompette*, a book that any musician interested in the natural trumpet should have. Fortunately, this method, being in the public domain, is, at the time of writing this guide, easily downloadable from the website of the International Music Score Library Project (IMSLP). Currently, only an edition

[1] As a point of clarification, notes outside the harmonic series can be produced on such instruments if one considers lipped harmonics to be notes outside of the harmonic series.

[2] Since the harmonic series is a natural phenomenon, it is probably more accurate to write that the harmonics of the harmonic series, while in tune, do not match tuning systems used today.

with the original French text is available from IMSLP, so those without a reading knowledge of that language would benefit from finding a translated version.[3]

At the end of this guide, I offer some original compositions where one can apply the results of working on different crooks. It is my intention that these pieces be used both for study as well as for performance.

Acknowledgments and Thanks

A few years ago I felt inspired to write a few pieces for natural trumpets since very little contemporary literature for the instrument exists. After showing some of these compositions to my friend and colleague Rupprecht Drees, he not only offered me positive feedback, but also point out that they would work well in a method for natural trumpet, and thus the seed was planted for writing this guide! I am very thankful to him for both this inspiration as well as reading the draft and giving me some helpful comments. I would also like to give a special thanks to Anthony Plog who not only looked at my pieces and gave advice on the text, but also helped tremendously with connecting me with the publisher. While space does not allow me to mention everyone whose wisdom I have benefited from, I would like to give special acknowledgement my former teachers Chris Gekker and Barry Baugess for both the musical knowledge that they imparted as well as for reading through and giving feedback on the text.

[3] The Canadian publisher qPress, for example, offers a version of Dauverné's method translated into English.

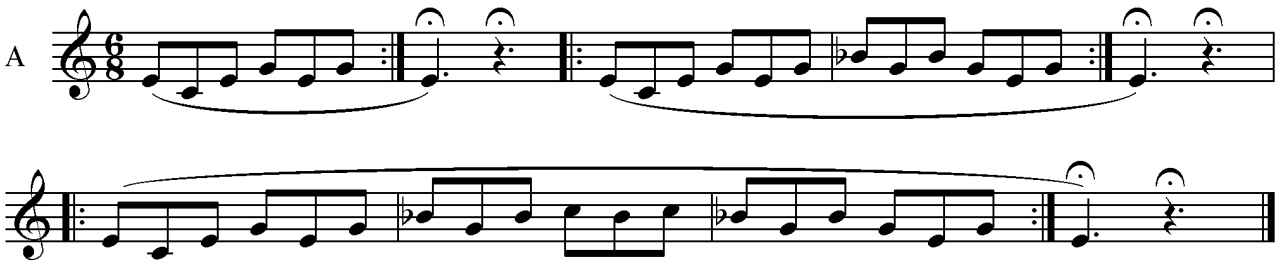
Warming Up on the Natural Trumpet

Warming up properly and thoroughly on the natural trumpet is equally as important as doing so on the modern trumpet, especially when one considers the preparation needed to contend with the physical demands of the natural trumpet and the difficulty of much of its repertoire. Warming up is far from a "one-size-fits-all" activity, but rather something incredibly personal. Just as on the modern trumpet, it is unlikely that one particular player's ideal warm-up routine will equally suit another player. For me, it has been helpful to avoid being overly rigid in my warm up. Consequently, my specific choice of warm-up exercises depends on a variety of factors including the repertoire that I am preparing or performing at the time and my general physical (and mental) state on a particular day.

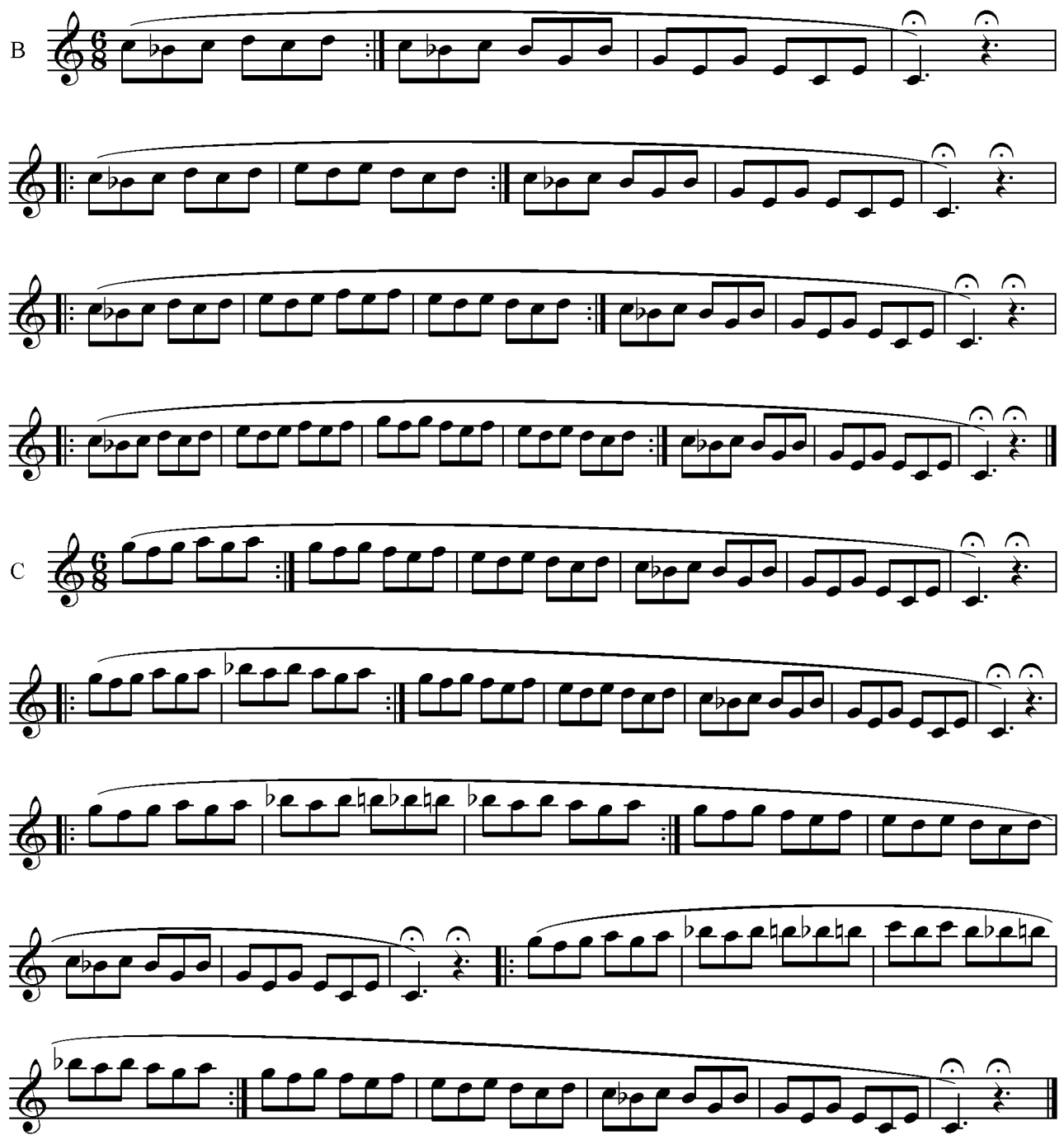
Most of the time I warm up on my D 415 crook since it is one of the most comfortable-feeling crooks on my particular instrument. While a certain amount of this comfort can be attributed to my familiarity with it, D 415 tends to be a sort of "Goldilocks" crook for a number of players in the sense that it feels neither too tight nor too loose. This sensation of feeling "just right" is due to its status as one the natural trumpet's middle-length crooks.

In connection with my aim of avoiding an overly rigid routine, on certain days, I break my habit of beginning in D 415 and, instead, warm up on another crook. In some instances I opt to begin on another middle-length crook such as C 440 or C 415, while at other times I choose to start on either a much longer or much shorter crook. Sometimes the choice is more or less random, being mainly for the purpose of adding variety to my routine; at other times, the choice is deliberate, for example if I am performing on a specific crook that day and desire to get in touch with it early. It is worth mentioning, however, that I sometimes deliberately warm up on a different crook than the one(s) on which I am performing.

When first picking up the trumpet for the day, after a few seconds of light mouthpiece buzzing, I like to test the my response on the instrument by playing a very soft written C_4 or E_4, after which I usually move immediately to flexibility studies because I tend to get a bit stiff if I wait too long before performing such exercises.[4] Incorporating flexibility relatively early in one's warm-up routine is, in my experience, beneficial since playing the natural trumpet with ease requires a great deal of agility, and flexibility studies are effective tools for strengthening this aspect of one's playing. Below is one of my go-to flexibility exercises:



[4] This guide uses scientific pitch notation, also called international pitch notation, to notate pitches, where C_4 is the fourth harmonic of the harmonic series on the natural trumpet (assuming the use of a harmonic series with C as the fundamental).

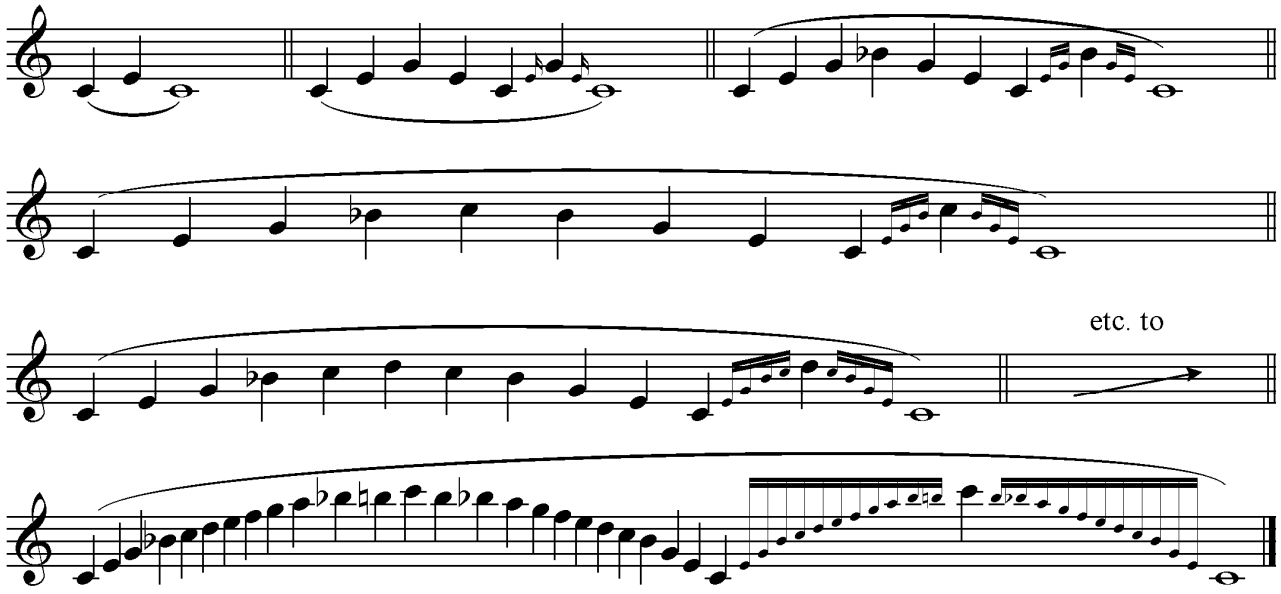


When practicing flexibility exercises like the one above on the natural trumpet, I suggest playing without holes even if the instrument used has them. Moreover, it is helpful to avoid bending the "out-of-tune" harmonics—in particular harmonics 7 (a slightly flat B♭$_4$), 11 (a slightly sharp F$_5$), 13 (a slightly flat A$_5$), and 14 (a slightly flat B♭$_5$)—into tune; instead, play all notes where they naturally lie on the instrument in order to keep the lips relaxed and pliable and the sound resonant and open.[5] Try to maintain a very relaxed breath, focusing on keeping the air stream continuous during the entire slur. In the above exercise, I like to play the repeats as many times as possible while still avoiding a tense last note due to insufficient air.

[5] For exercises and advice on the B♭$_4$ and F$_5$, see pp. 50–53 of Dauverné's method. Additionally, as noted in the introduction, since the harmonic series is a natural phenomenon, it is probably more actuate to write that these harmonics are in tune but do not match tuning systems used today.

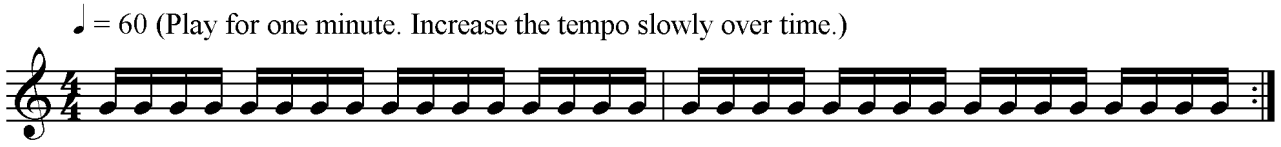
On some days, I perform the above exercise more or less as written, and on other days—keeping in line with my objective of not being too rigid—I modify it. In the modified version, I might expand part A up to G_5 or C_6, in which case I can skip part B and/or C while still covering the exercise's full two-octave range. Furthermore, I often expand the exercise downward to G_3 (and sometimes C_3) and/or upward above C_6 depending on my needs for the day as well as crook I am using. While, as mentioned, I typically warm up on my D 415 crook, I can more easily expand the range downward when playing on shorter/higher crooks and can more easily expand upward when playing on longer/lower crooks.

When playing the natural trumpet, one should apply a pyramid approach to the production of the sound. In contrast to the modern approach of working assiduously to attain an extremely consistent sound throughout the different registers, on the natural trumpet, notes in the lower *principale* register were stronger than the light, delicate, and vocal-like notes in the upper *clarino* register. I try to float on the upper notes, which, in my experience, leads to a more relaxed, freer, and easier sounding (and feeling) upper register and gives the player better endurance, especially when performing demanding *clarino* parts. A glissando exercise, like the one below, can be used to check for the feeling of playing with such a pyramid approach:



Try to avoid forcing or accenting the high notes when executing the above exercise, but rather imagine the feeling of the upper notes coming out of the lower ones. After playing the quarter-note portion of the exercise, the following glissando portion can be repeated several times *ad libitum*.

After flexibility studies, I move to articulation studies to warm up my tongue. A favorite exercise of mine is one I learned when studying modern trumpet with my former teacher Chris Gekker. The exercise, which I call the minute drill, can be seen below:

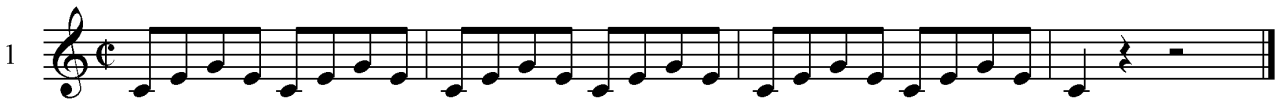


This drill is relatively simple: the player sets a metronome to a specific tempo and articulates repeated sixteenth notes on G_4 for one minute (using a timer or stopwatch to keep track

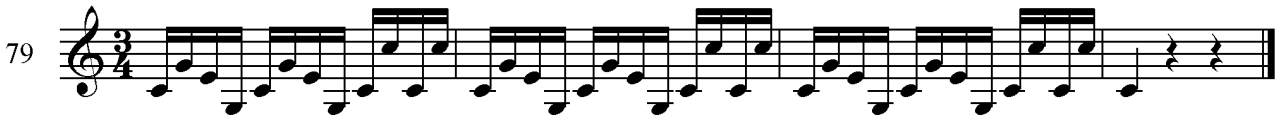
of the elapsed time)[6]; full, relaxed breaths should be taken during the course of the exercise as needed. One should start slowly and increase the tempo very slowly over time. I developed the habit of sticking with a tempo for one week before increasing it, often by as little as one beat per minute, the following week. Since I use this drill as a technical exercise for strengthening the endurance, control, and speed of the tongue rather than as a musical exercise for working on expressive articulation, when playing it, I use a smooth, yet equal articulation similar to the articulation I use when performing the exercise on a modern trumpet.

Training the tongue as described above not only leads to a faster tongue stroke, but also helps to improve one's flexibility, leading to a greater ease of execution and a more pleasant tone on the trumpet. In addition to practicing the minute drill with a front-of-the-tongue consonant (T or D), it is also advisable to play it with a back-of-the-tongue consonant (K or G). Mastery of back-of-the-tongue consonants not only leads to a more relaxed throat, but also helps to improve multiple tonguing.

After my tongue is warmed up from the minute drill, I continue with exercises from the *100 Exercices pour donner de l'agilité de la précision à l'action de la langue* (pp. 32–39) found in François Georges Auguste Dauverné's (1799–1874) *Méthode pour la trompette* published in Paris in 1857.[7] These exercises are in the *principale* register, never exceeding the range from G_3 to C_5; furthermore, the seventh harmonic is never used. Despite their limited range, these studies are important basic exercises for trumpeters. The exercises are quite rudimentary in nature, as can be seen in exercise 1 below:



However, the difficulty level generally increases as the exercises progress. A comparison between the above exercise and exercise 79 below helps to demonstrate this:



I suggest using a metronome for these studies, especially when the minute drill precedes them. Even when playing on a trumpet with vent holes, I normally prefer to practice these exercises without holes. I ordinarily select a couple of these exercises when I warm up, varying the exercises I choose daily. Thus, one day I might choose exercises 1 and 51, the next day I might play exercises 2 and 52, etc. When I am preparing either low Baroque parts—like trumpet 3 in J.S. Bach's music or trumpet 2 or 3 in Handel's music—or trumpet parts from the Classical or Romantic periods, I nornally play more of these studies. As Edward Tarr notes, since Dauverné's exercises were written when Classical repertoire was played on natural trumpets, they are well suited to preparing Classical parts.

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[6] While this note is quite comfortable on the modern trumpet, it is significantly easier to crack on the natural trumpet in many musical situations. Therefore, I also find this exercise beneficial to working on the stability of the G_4 on the natural trumpet. When this note feels comfortable early in my warm up, I feel much more at ease the rest of the day.

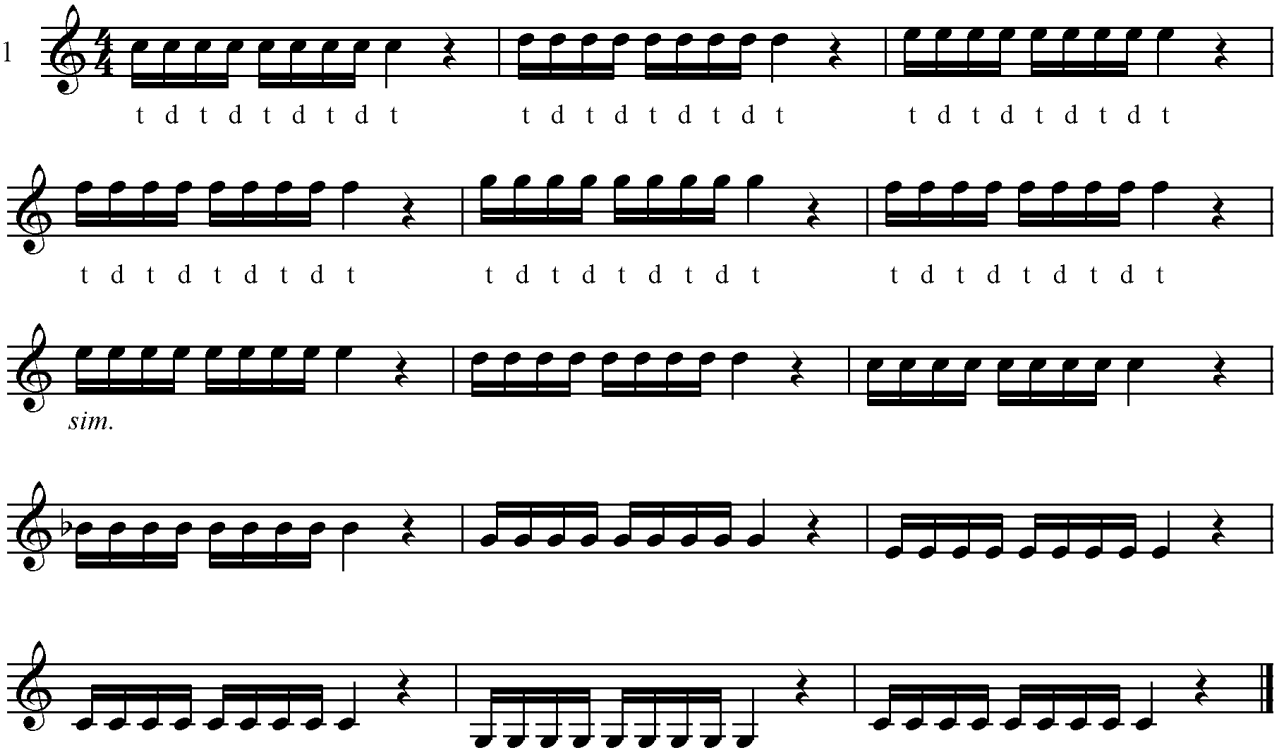
[7] Many of the exercises in Dauverné's method will be familiar to trumpeters who use Tarr's *The Art of Baroque Trumpet Playing* books since Tarr borrows many of his exercises from Dauverné, writing in the introduction to volume 1 on page 6 that "The point of departure for the organization of the present volume was François Georges Auguste Dauverné's *Méthode pour la trompette* (Paris 1857)." This is not so uncommon since writers of methods books and treatises historically borrowed from other authors. Dauverné, for example, borrows material from A. Gobert's *Méthode de trompette d'ordonnance [,] trompette à clefs, alto orphicléide et orphicléide basse* (ca. 1823) and Joseph Gebhardt Kresser's *Méthode complète pour la trompette d'harmonie* (ca. 1836).

After the above, I generally feel ready to work more extensively on articulation, trills, études (like the *25 Études caractéristiques* found in Dauverné's method), and repertoire pieces. The following sections of this guide discuss this in more detail.

Articulation on the Natural Trumpet

As opposed to modern trumpet playing where players generally aim for a consistent attack on all notes that a composer does not explicitly ask for different articulation, players of the natural trumpet historically would have aimed for a wider variety of articulation syllables in melodic passages, as evidenced by the instructions present in various historical trumpet methods. The use of unequal tonguing was not unique to the trumpet; such articulation is described in methods of other instruments such as Johann Joachim Quantz's *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversiere zu spielen* from 1752, a treatise on flute playing. Furthermore, instrumental design encouraged unequal articulations, as can be seen with bow design for string instruments. Baroque bows, with their convex shape, tended to be shorter than their modern counterparts; these attributes contributed a noticeable contrast between down bows and up bows, with the former generally being stronger (this was not always true, as can be seen with the gamba where up bows are stronger). Modern bows, on the other hand, with their concave shape, give a more even sound across the bow, requiring more effort on the part of the player to distinguish between heavier and lighter articulations.

When playing melodic passages in the natural trumpet's *clarino* register, the player should apply a vocal approach to his or her interpretation, using articulation as a tool to achieve this. When working to develop a feeling for unequal articulation, I find it beneficial to play repeated notes, alternating between strong and weak tonguing syllables. Thus, I might begin my melodic articulation practice with an exercise like the following:



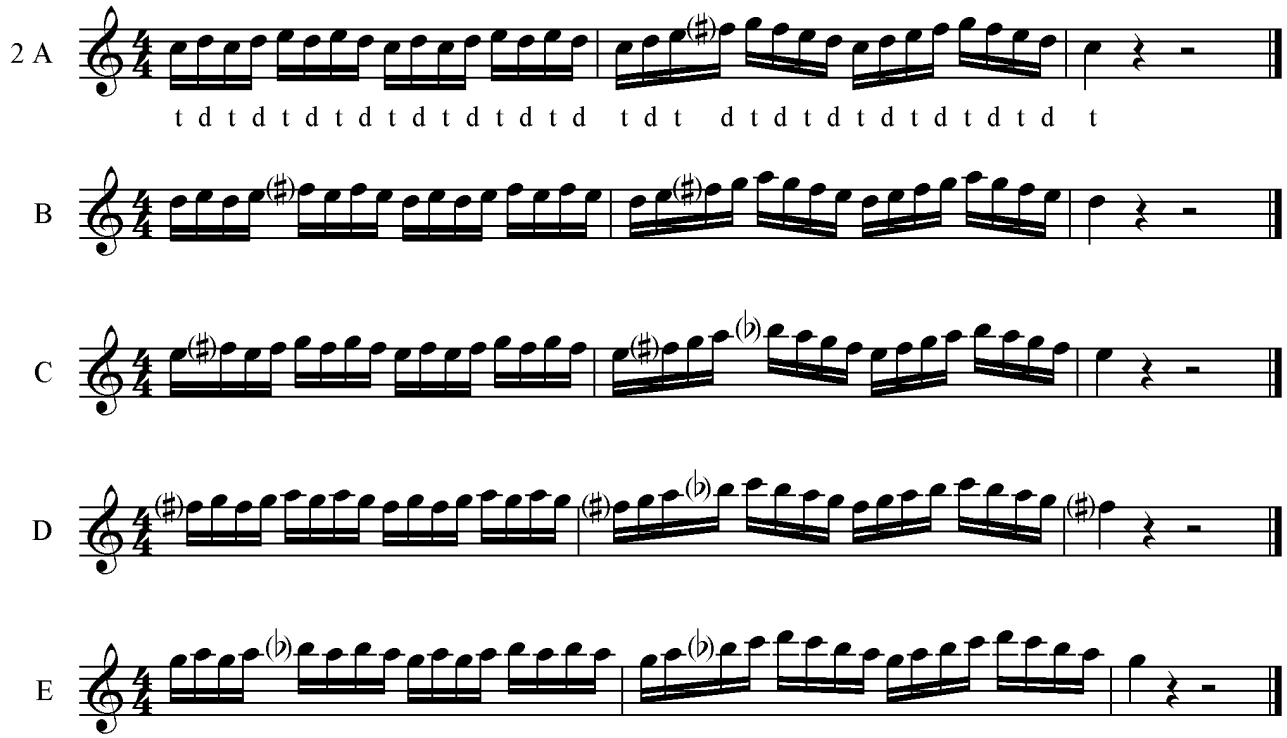
Using unequal articulations on the same note rather than on changing notes allows me to more intensely focus on the function of the tongue in conjunction with the air since I cannot achieve the feeling of strong verses weak by merely slurring. A note about the consonants: different historical treaties use a variety of articulations, and I believe that "T" and "D" serve as a useful

starting point for the player. It helps to experiment with a variety of syllables while keeping in mind that one's native language will have some influence on one's interpretation of the specific tonguing syllables noted in treatises.

After a good feeling for unequal articulation on repeated notes is established, I like to play exercises where the notes change. For this, I use exercises from Dauverné's method, including the *Exercices sur le fa naturel considéré comme note factice* (pp. 52–53), the *30 Exercices sur les notes aiguës de la trompette* (pp. 71–74), and the *30 Exercices pour familiariser avec les notes sur-aiguës de la trompette* (pp. 80–83), many of which appear in Tarr's *The Art of Baroque Trumpet Playing* method. When specifically addressing unequal articulation while practicing Dauverné's exercises, I typically remove slurs and staccato markings (as Tarr does) to better focus on the strong and weak tonguing syllables.

Additionally, I have found it helpful to write my own exercises to address issues with my articulation. For me, short patterns covering a relatively narrow range are particularly useful since I can then play the exercises in different parts of the *clarino* register in different keys; nevertheless, I do not neglect practicing longer exercises covering a wider range. Do not be afraid to compose your own exercises to suit your personal needs!

Below are a number of exercises I wrote that have aided me.[8] The earlier exercises are more generic while the later exercises are based on excerpts from musical works. I suggest practicing these exercises on a variety of crooks.



[8] **Note that in exercises 2–16 in this section on articulation, in order to condense the notation, the accidentals in round brackets are to be played *ad libitum*.** Thus, in exercise 2A, the exercise can be played once with F and then repeated with F♯. More bracketed accidentals offer more options for variation; for example, exercise 2C can be played once with F and B, again with F♯ and B, again with F and B♭, and finally with F♯ and B♭.

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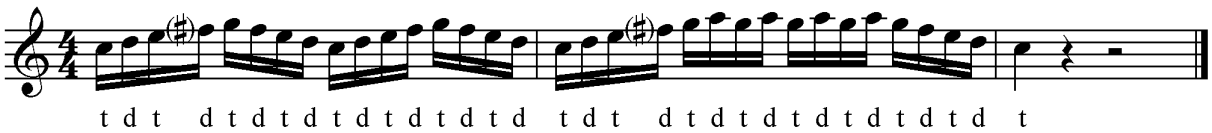

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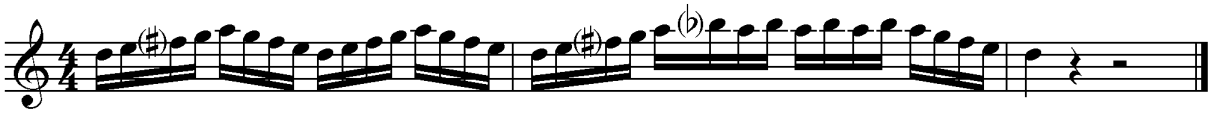

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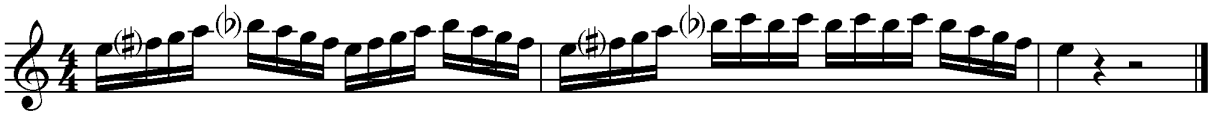

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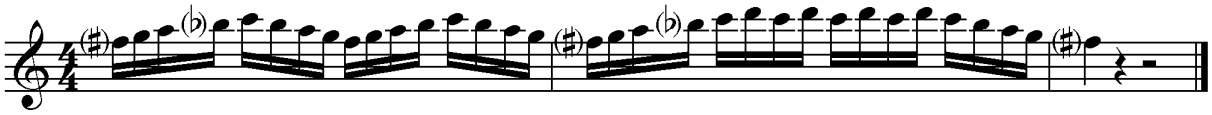

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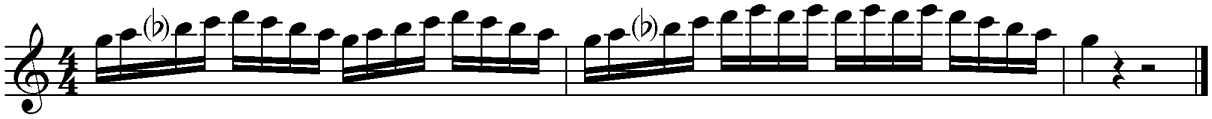

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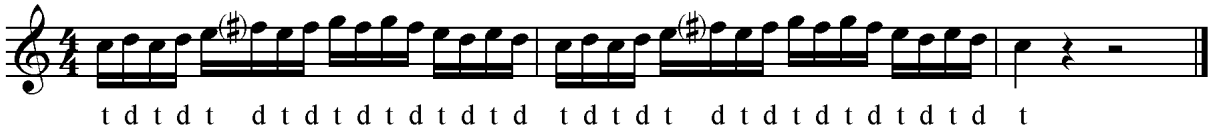

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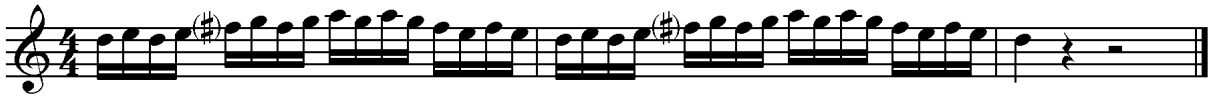

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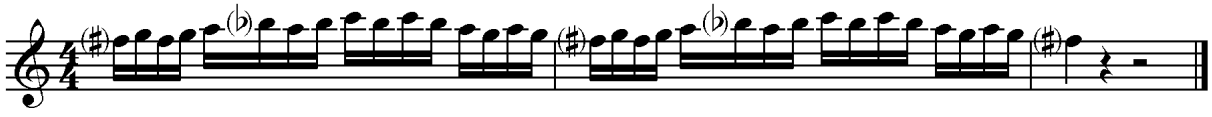

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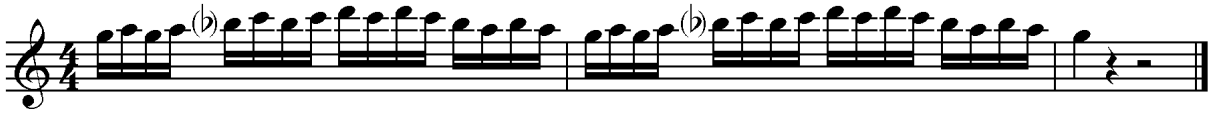
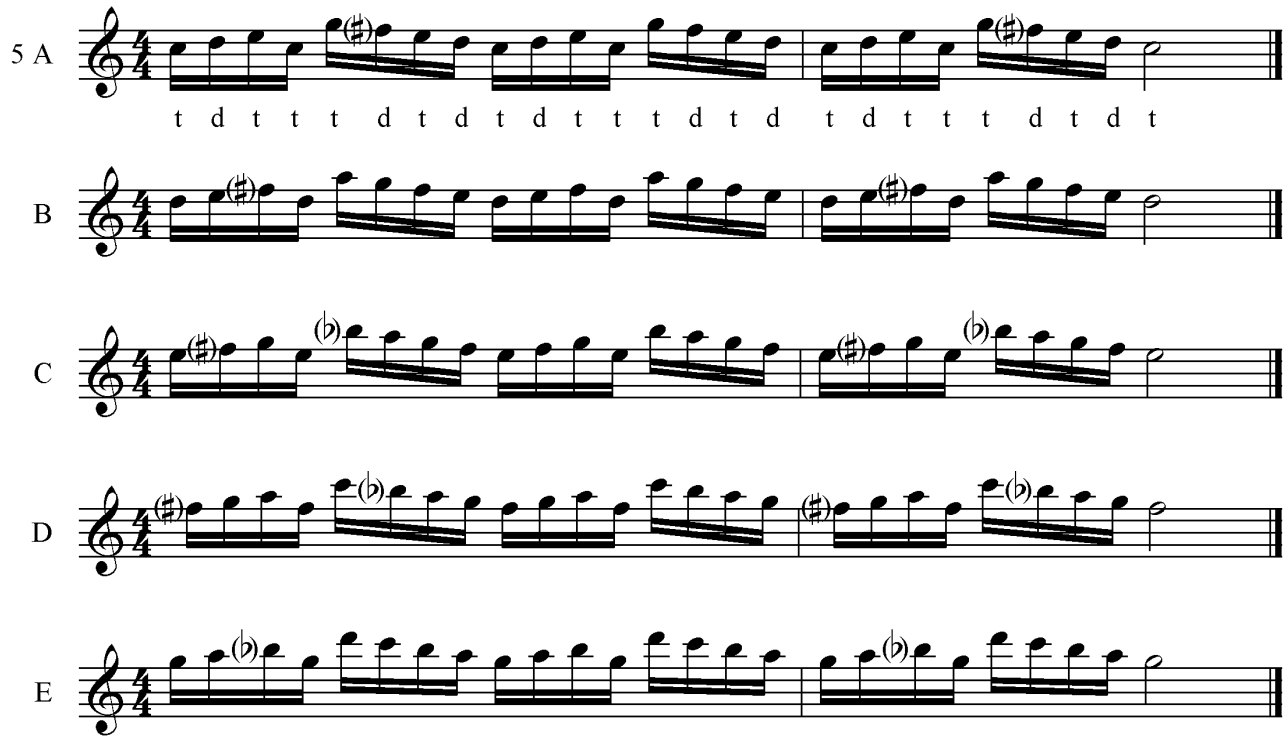
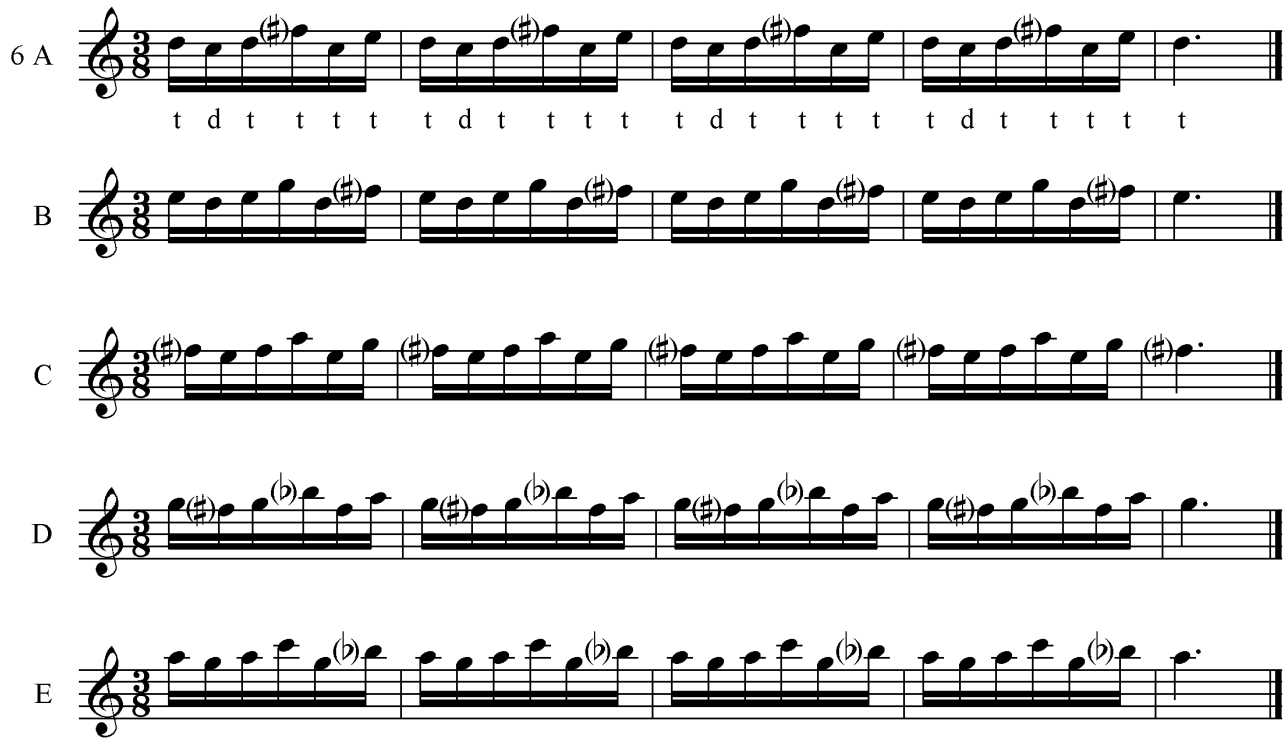
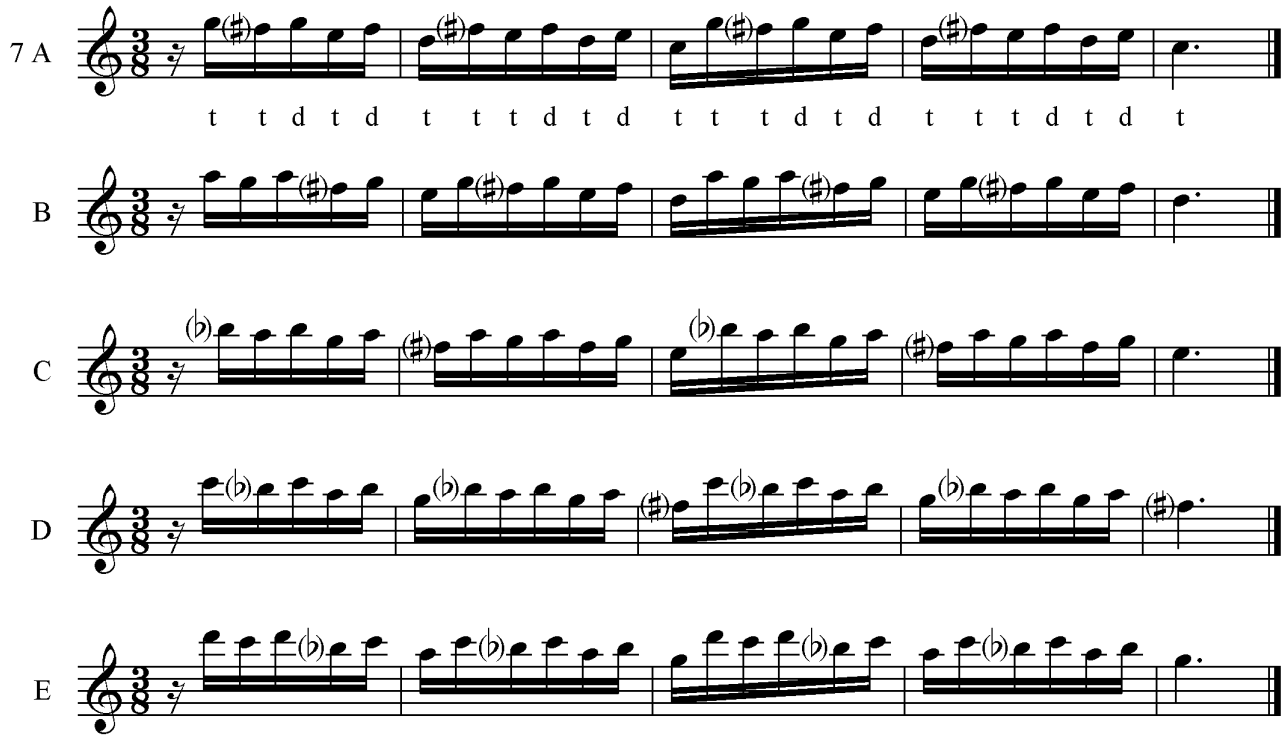




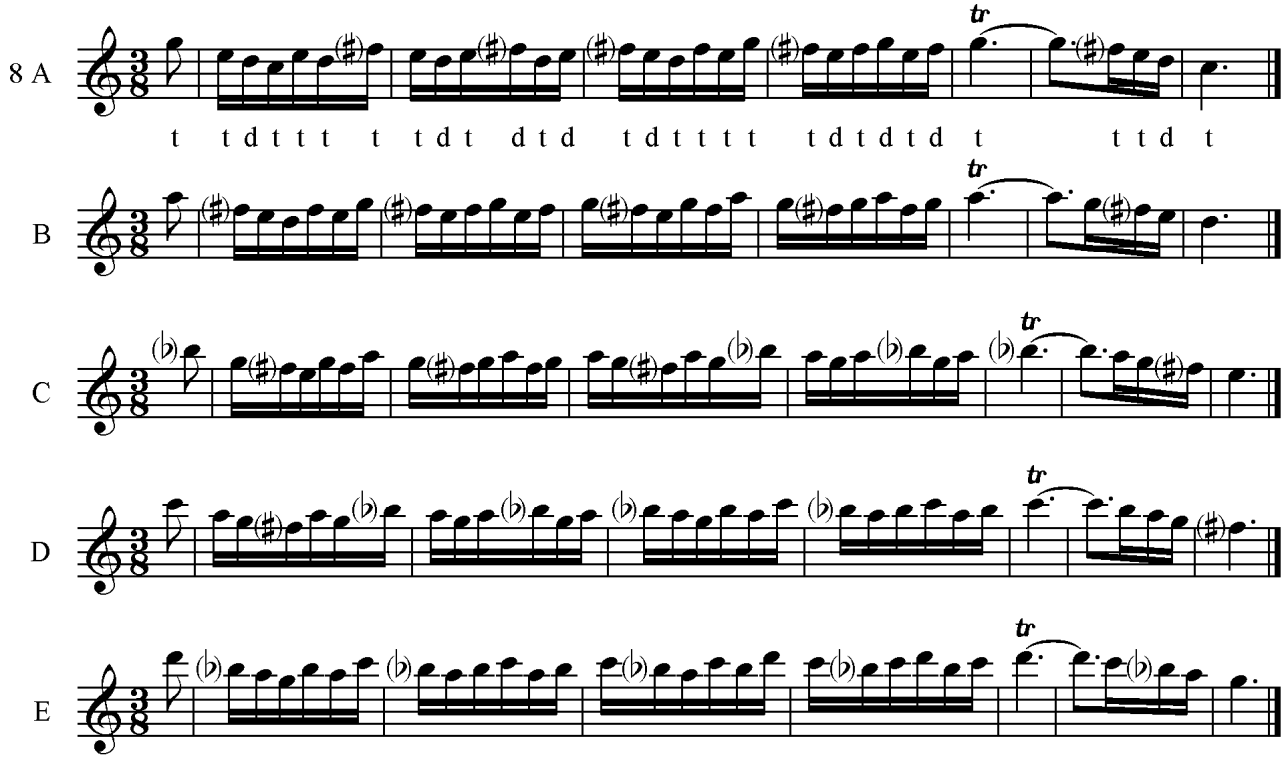
J.S. Bach: Easter Oratorio, BWV 249 (movement 1)



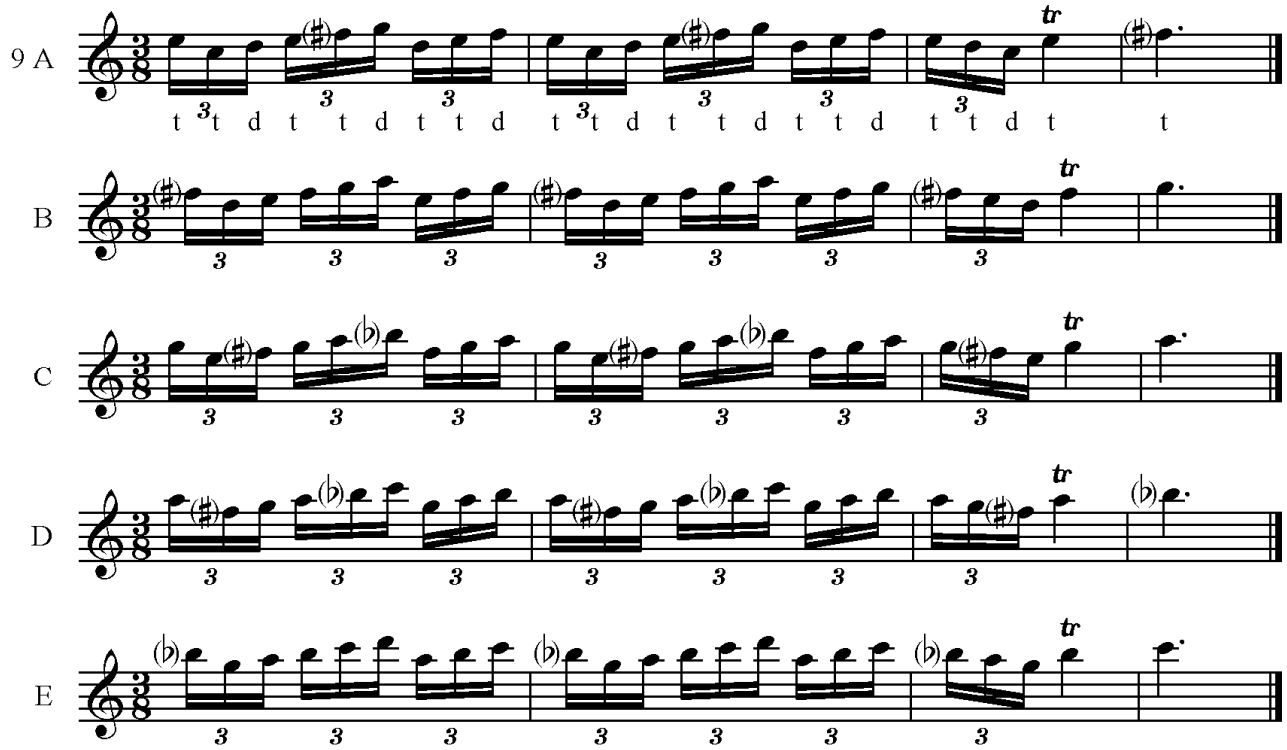
J.S. Bach: Easter Oratorio, BWV 249 (movement 1)



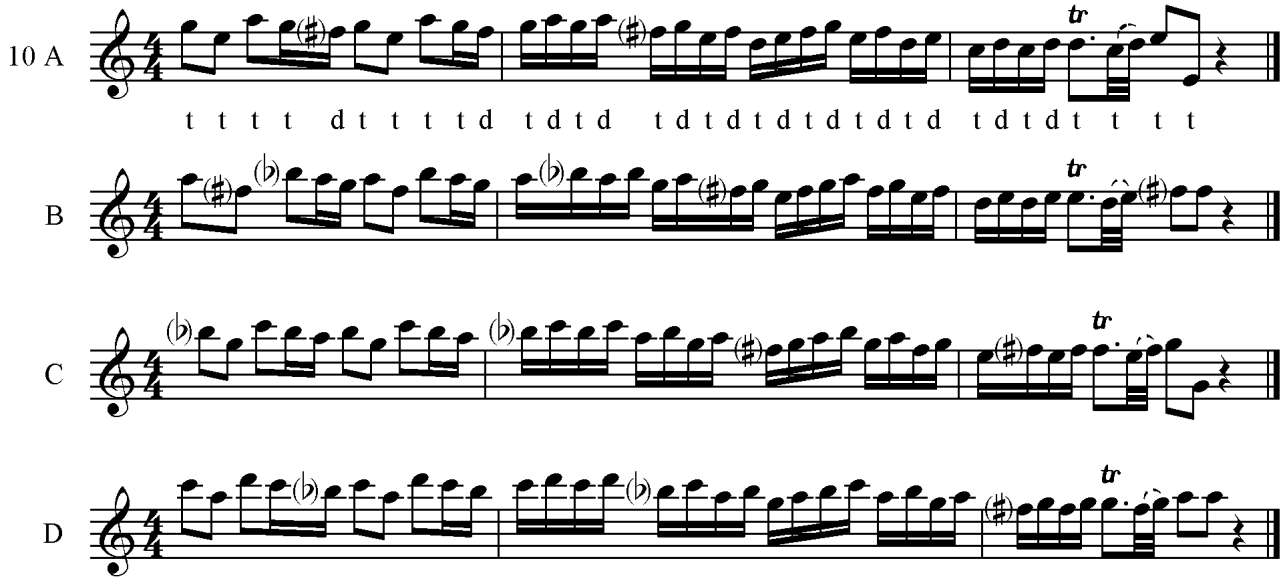
J.S. Bach: Mass in B Minor, BWV 232 (Osanna in excelsis)



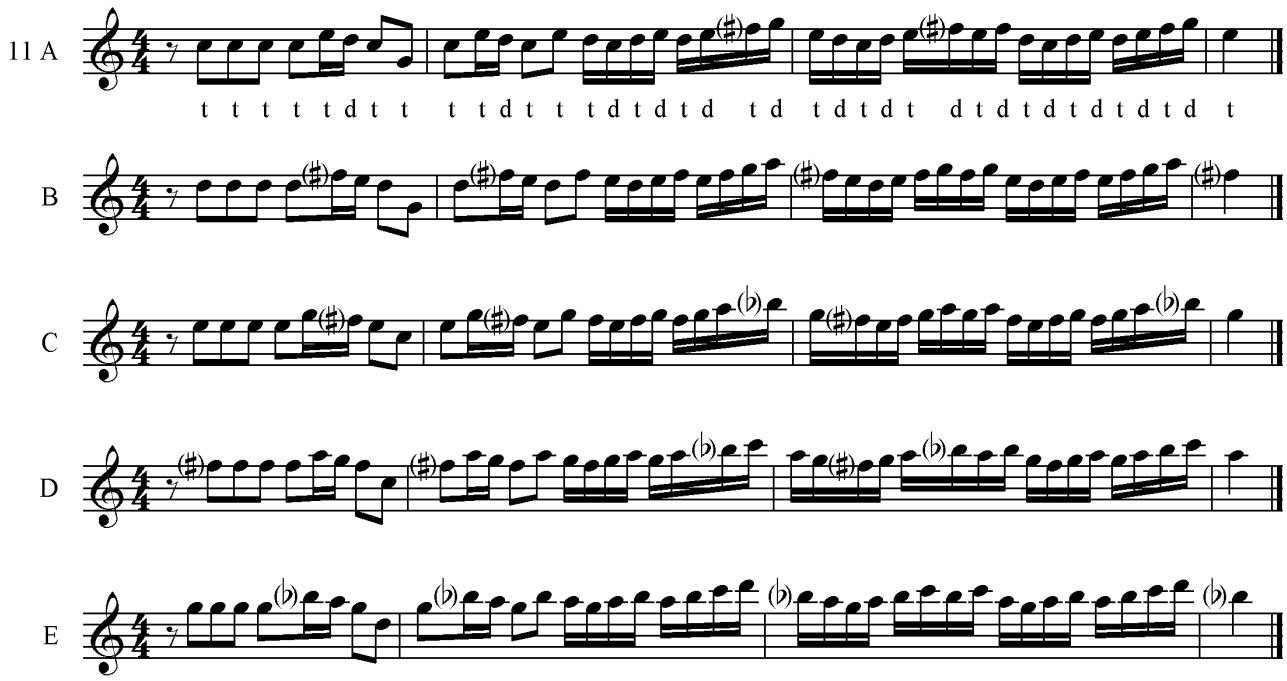
C.F.C. Fasch: Concerto for Trumpet, Violin, and Oboe d'Amore in E Major (movement 3)



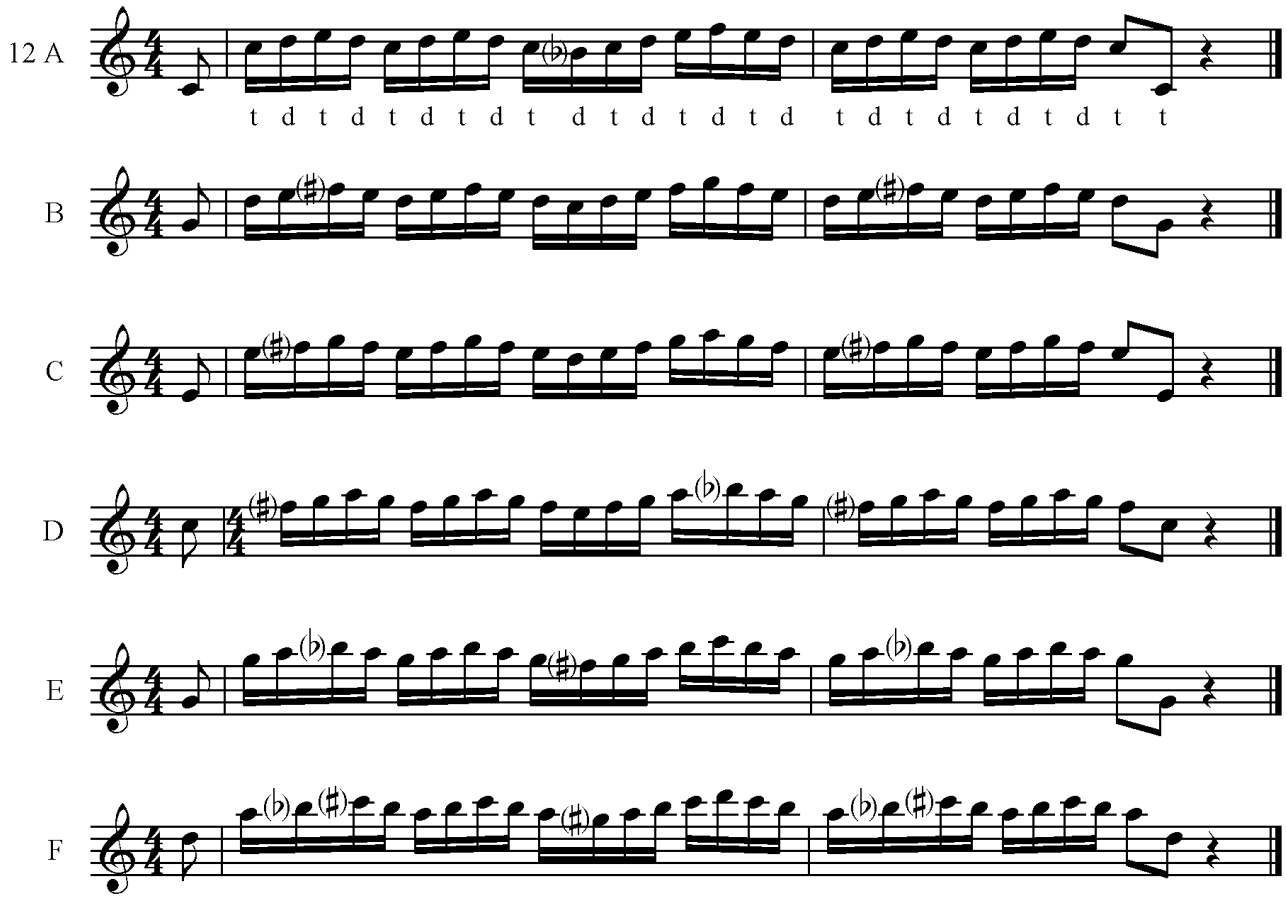
G.P. Telemann: Trumpet Concerto, TWV 51:D7 (movement 2)



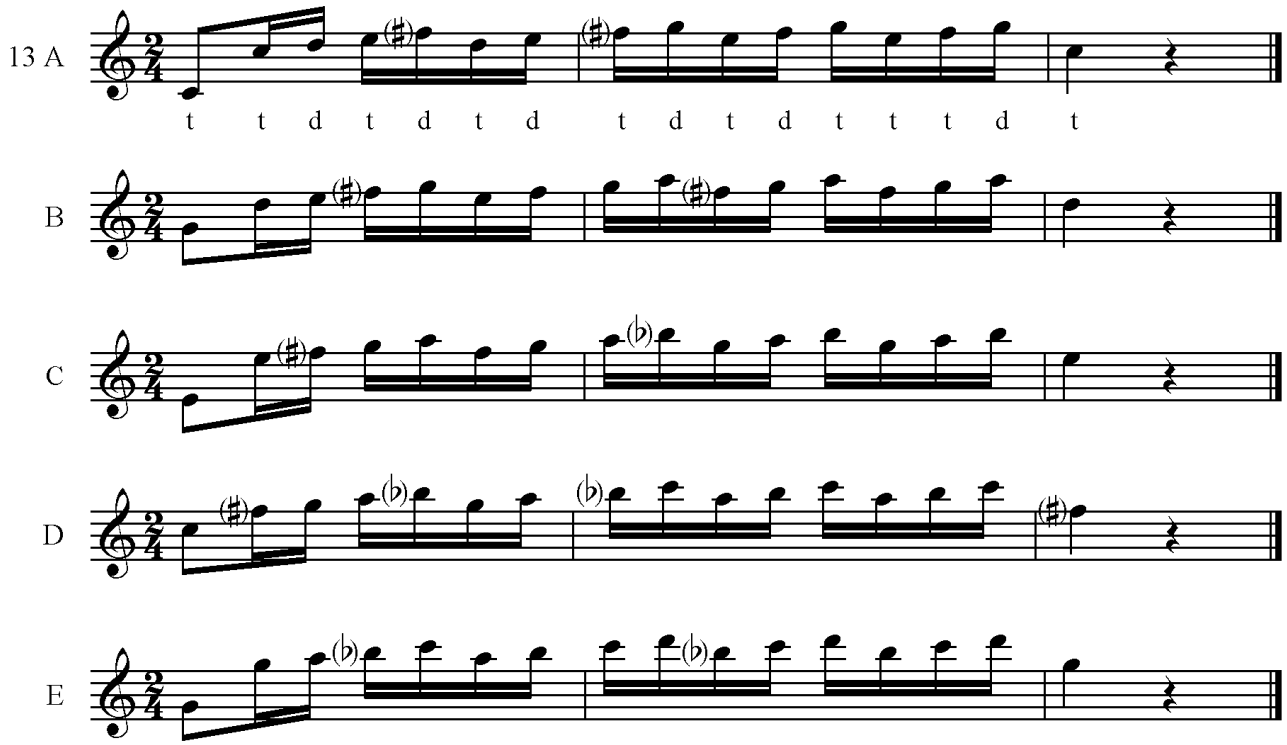
G.P. Telemann: Trumpet Concerto, TWV 51:D7 (movement 4)



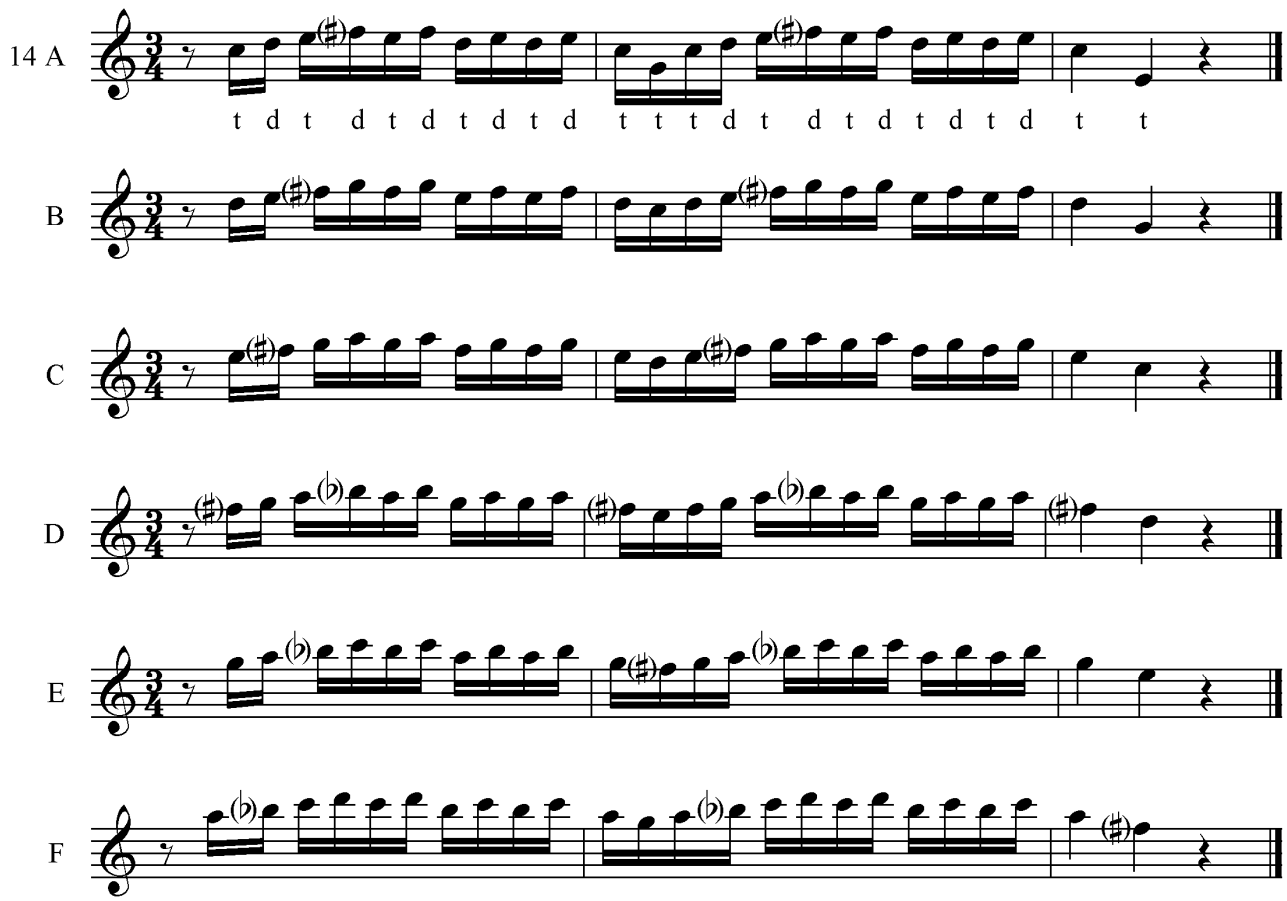
J.S. Bach: Brandenburg Concerto No.2, BWV 1047 (movement 1)



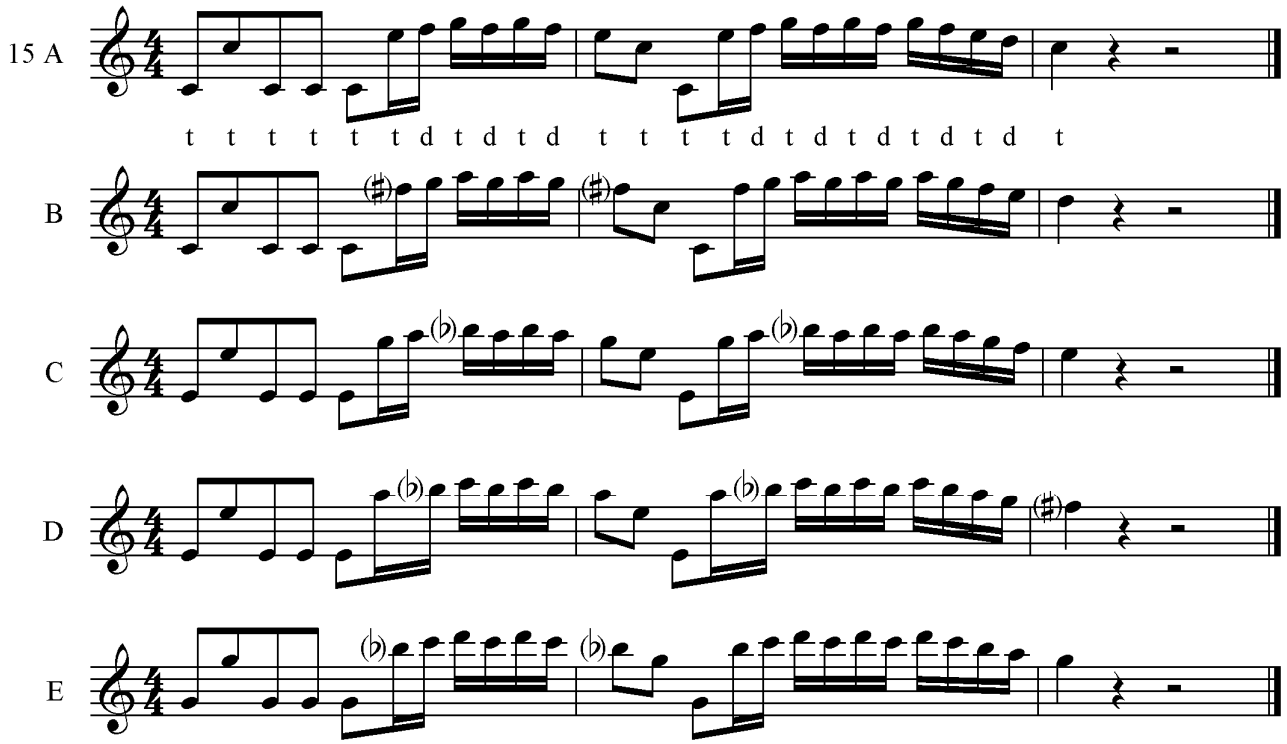
J.S. Bach: Brandenburg Concerto No.2, BWV 1047 (movement 3)



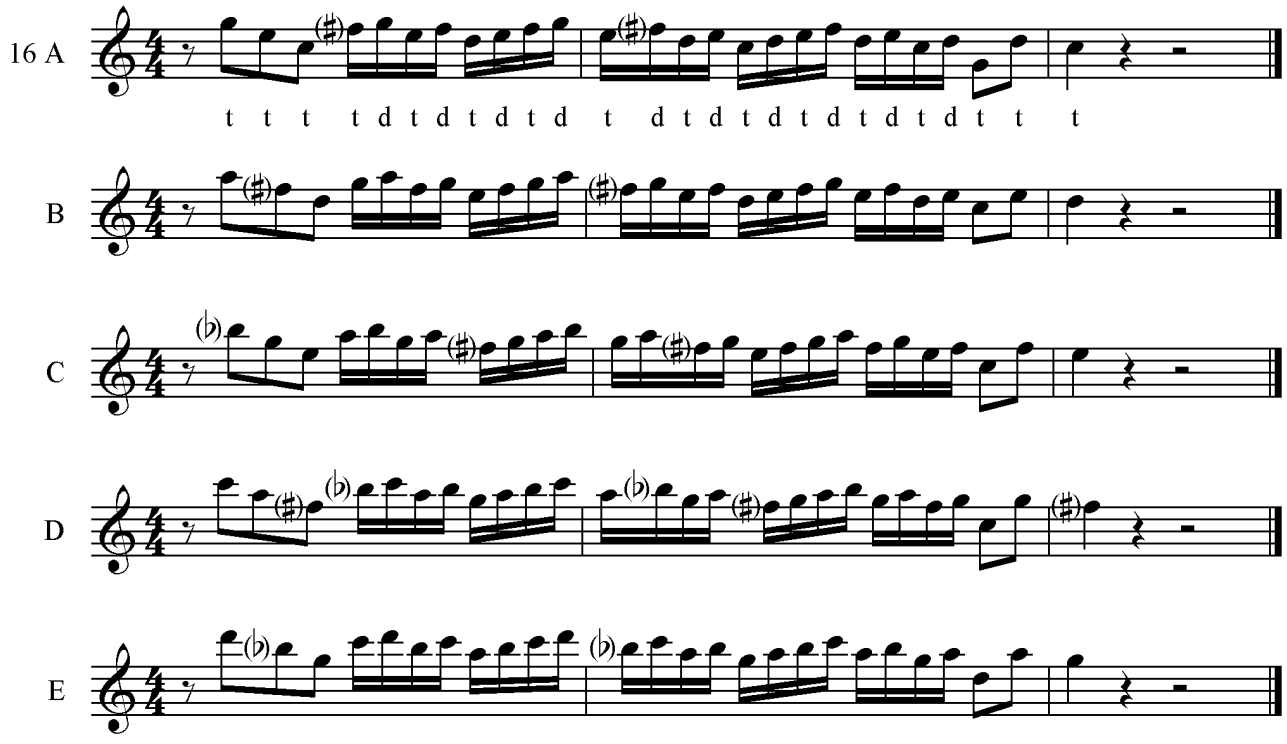
J.F. Fasch: Trumpet Concerto, FaWV L:D1 (movement 3) **and** J.S. Bach: *Die Himmel erzählen die Ehre Gottes*, BWV 76 (movement 1)



A. Vivaldi: Gloria, RV 589 (movement 1)



G.F. Handel: Dettingen Te Deum, HWV 283 (movement 1)

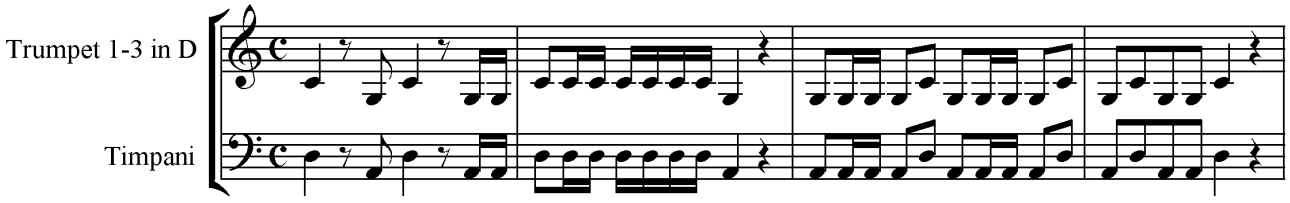


While the use of single tonguing syllables has been emphasized up to this point, working on unequal articulation employing multiple tonguing syllables is strongly encouraged. It is advisable to apply double and triple tonguing syllables to the same exercises used for single tonguing; in such cases, I suggest retaining a front-of-the-tongue consonant for the stronger notes and substituting the weaker notes with a back-of-the-tongue consonant. Unless an exercise (or a piece of music) requires a more martial type of execution, aim for an ultra-fluid and light

articulation while still retaining the feeling of strong versus weak. I personally find that "D" as the front-of-the-tongue consonant and "G" as the back-of-the-tongue work quite well when aiming for such fluidity while using multiple tonguing.

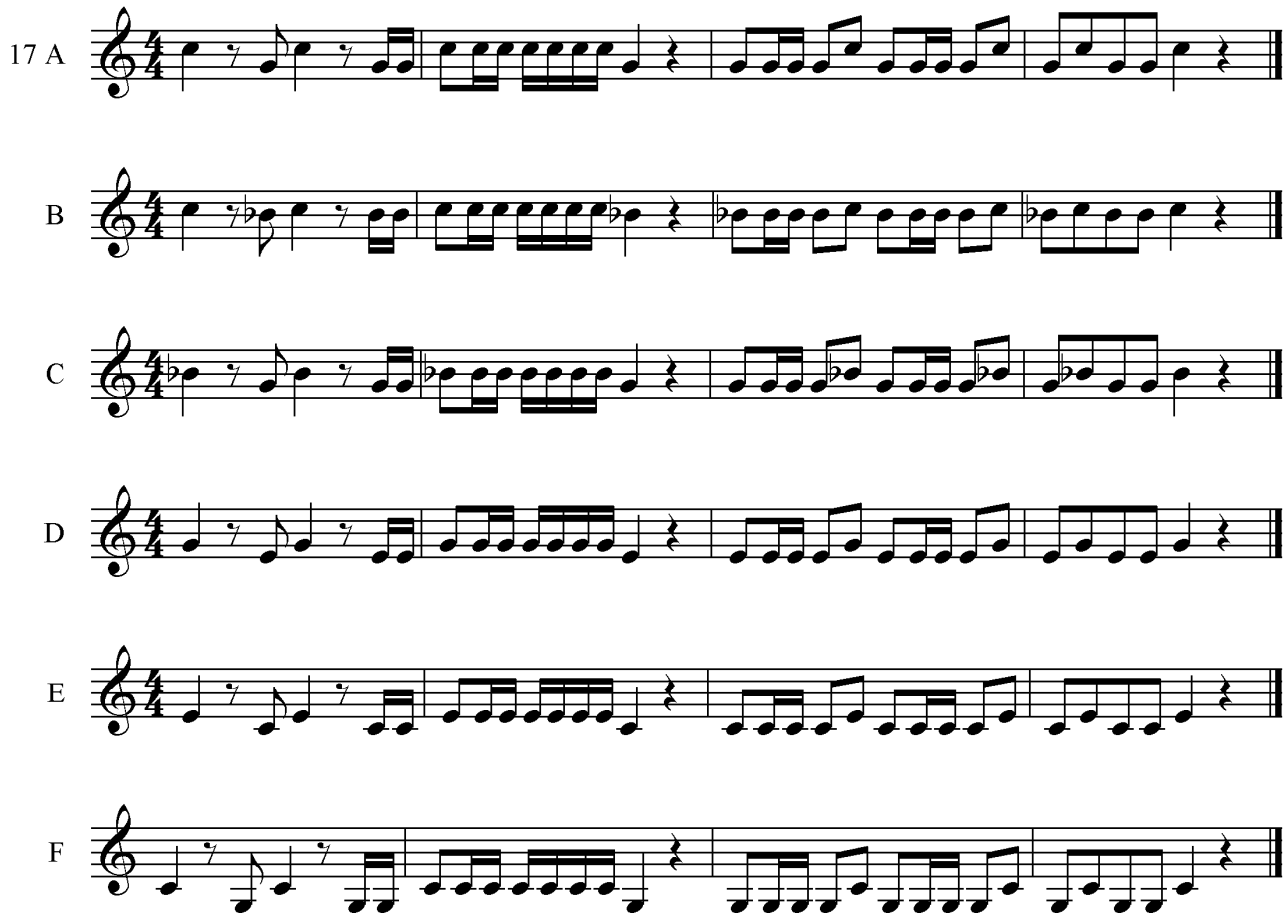
I also highly recommend spending time working on slow multiple tonguing. While it is clearly important to develop the speed and control of one's single tongue—a quick single tongue is important for triple tonguing where two thirds of the articulation consists of a front-of-the-tongue consonant—developing a useable slow double and triple tongue is also an effective means of closing the gap between single and multiple tonguing. Furthermore, practicing multiple tonguing slowly has the benefit of making it easier to double and triple tongue at quicker tempos in a more controlled manner.

There will be times when playing the natural trumpet where the articulation will not be as unequal as when one is executing florid passages in the *clarino* register, such as when playing fanfare figures in the *principale* register or repeated notes of the same pitch. Take, for example, the opening of Handel's Dettingen Te Deum, HWV 283 seen below:



While this passage should employ thoughtful phrasing, rather than using a vocal-like paired articulation, the sixteenth notes in this context are more convincing when played more percussively and sharply, especially since the passage is doubled by the timpani. All three trumpeters must have a good control of their low register and employ clear articulation to emphasize the martial affect of the motif.

For many principal players who spend a majority of their time in the *clarino* register, passages like the one above will likely require some devoted practice. As such a player, I understand this issue very well; when preparing such a passage, I like to apply a similar strategy as in the articulation exercises I presented above, but instead of working my way up, I start higher and progressively work down. Below is a specific exercise I like to play when preparing HWV 283 for performance:



I practice the above using single-tonguing consonants—usually "T" here—as well as double-tonguing consonants—I prefer something a bit closer to "T-K" rather than "D-G" to avoid too much muddiness in the lower part of the trumpet's range. While the effort spent working on getting the passage clear is beneficial to one's overall playing, in the context of a performance, as the principal trumpeter, do not be afraid to either rest during this passage (and the other similar ones) or to allow the second and third players to give considerably more sound. After all, it is preferable to work smarter than harder.

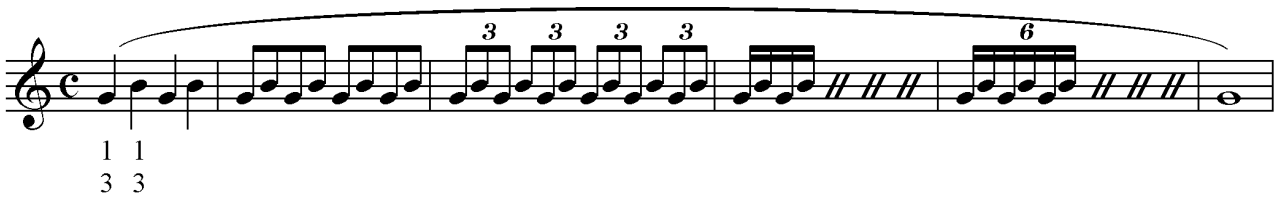
Developing and Refining Trills

Of the numerous ornaments present in music from the Baroque period, the trill is particularly important for players of the natural trumpet to master. Although the execution of this ubiquitous ornament causes many trumpeters problems, with diligent and careful practice, these difficulties can be surmounted.

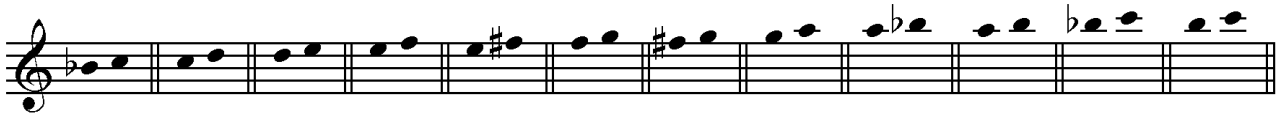
When I execute trills, I try to minimize extraneous embouchure movement; while I do not attempt to eliminate all movement, I move as little as possible to achieve a solid trill. Though many musicians, including myself, use the term "lip trill" to describe trills on the natural trumpet (and trills on the valved trumpet using the same fingering for both notes), I, in practice, focus more on using my tongue to manipulate the air than I focus on using the lips to do so—the lips merely support this manipulation of air flow. In order to better understand this concept, try whistling a trill while focusing on the motion of the tongue.

When working to coordinate the muscles used for trilling between harmonics, beginning slowly and increasing the speed over time is imperative to eliminating imperfections. Although trills generally should not be too metronomic and rigid in performance, working with a metronome

during the learning process is helpful for developing and refining one's overall control. When practicing trills, exercises from the *Grande méthode complète de cornet à pistons* by Jean-Baptiste Arban (1825–1889), a successful student of Dauverné, have helped me. Exercise 22 on page 44 is a favorite of mine, the first line of which can be seen below:



While Arban's exercise was composed for an instrument with valves, a lip slur is intended, as evidenced by the indicated fingering below the staff of the exercise. When adapting this exercise for the natural trumpet, I play Arban's rhythms while substituting pairs of harmonics a whole step or half step apart, such as those seen below:

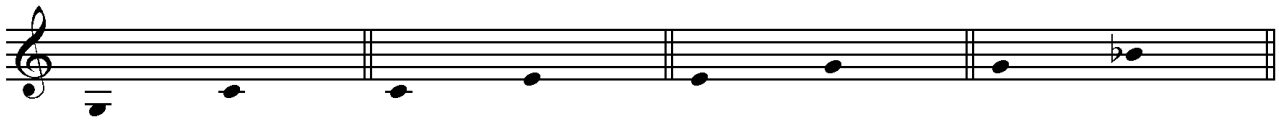


I extend this trill exercise to harmonics above C_6, especially on the longer crooks where producing the higher harmonics is generally less demanding. In much of the natural trumpet's range where trills of a tone and semitone are possible, the harmonics will be adjacent. However, the higher one ascends on the harmonic series, the narrowing of the distance between harmonics eventually leads to intermittent notes, such as when trilling from $B\flat_5$ to C_6 where B_5 is between the principal (lower) and auxiliary (upper) notes.

Because the harmonics get closer as one ascends, it might feel more comfortable to start slightly higher where the intervals between the trills are a bit narrower—for example, playing a trill between D_5 and E_5 is slightly easier for me than playing a trill between C_5 and D_5. Of course, playing the higher notes of the harmonic series, even though the intervals are narrower, requires more strength, so I suggest finding a starting point that feels comfortable. Additionally, if changing the rhythmic values in the course of an exercise—for example progressing from quarter notes to eighth notes to eighth-note triplets—proves to be too challenging in the beginning, one can isolate a specific rhythmic value (like in exercises 16–21 on pp. 42–43 of Arban's method).

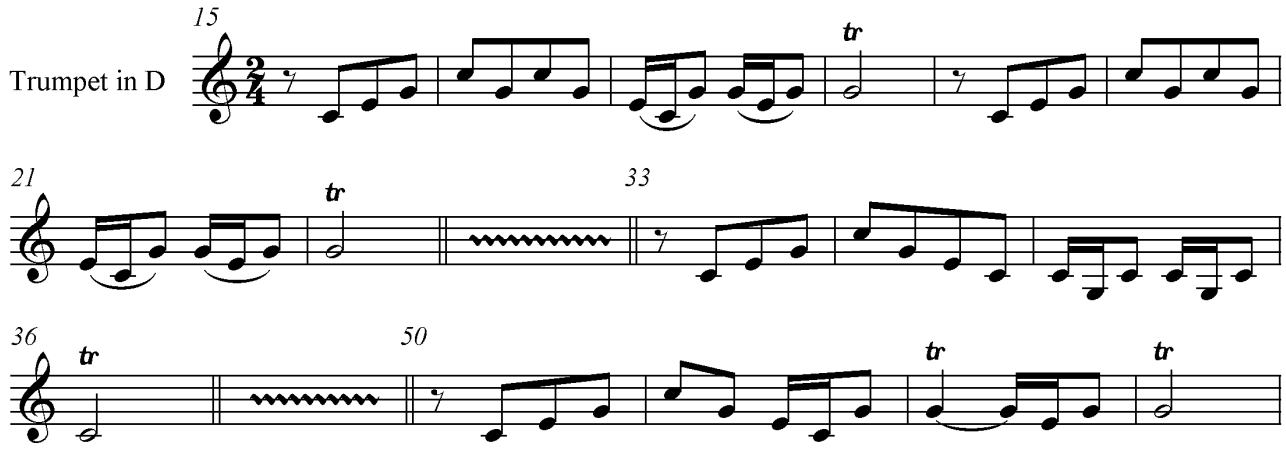
Although many musicians are taught that trills during the Baroque period begin on the auxiliary note, this is not always true, such as in Austro-Bohemian music—the music of composers such as Biber, Vejvanovský, Rittler, and Schmelzer—where beginning on the principal note is typical.[9] It is, therefore, advisable to practice beginning trills both on their principal and auxiliary notes.

Furthermore, it is worthwhile to practice trill exercises using the lower adjacent harmonics where the intervals exceed a second:



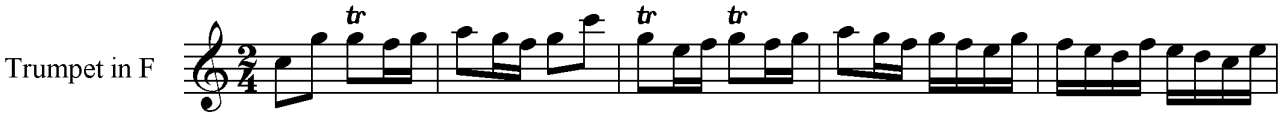
[9] Tarr gives insights into when to begin on the principal note and when to begin on the auxiliary note on page 45 of volume 1 of his method in his "Rules of Thumb for Trilling" section.

Such lower trills occasionally occur in the repertoire, notable examples of which include almost every notated trill found in the bass aria "Großer Herr, o starker König" from the first cantata in J.S. Bach's Christmas Oratorio, BWV 248:

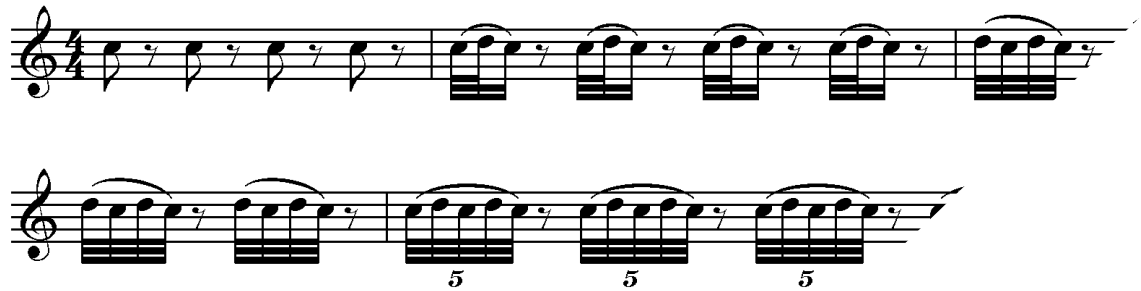


Here, the G trills go to B♭4 (which we try to bend down closer to A4) while the C trill goes to E4 (which we try to lip closer to D4). This is a case where I prefer to begin the trills on the principal note since the true auxiliary notes in the above example (written A4 for the G trill and D4 for the C trill) are not present in the harmonic series of the natural trumpet. By beginning on the principal note, the wideness of the trill is not as distracting to the ear as it would be if the trill were to begin on the auxiliary note.

During the performance of a trill, it is often musically effective to lean on its first note and then slightly accelerate its oscillations rather than playing perfectly even oscillations throughout. This freedom to accelerate not only allows for a musically satisfying result, but also facilitates the execution of trills since there is time to "warm them up" to their full speed. Understandably, the amount for freedom to accelerate is determined not only by the musical context, but also by the practical consideration of a trill's overall length; accelerating during a trill can be impractical, if not impossible, when the trill is of such a short duration that there is no time to play very many oscillations. Such types of short trills can be seen in the opening of the third movement of J.S. Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 2, BWV 1047:



To prepare for situations where it is necessary to start a trill at full speed due to its short duration, I practice exercises in which I quickly oscillate between two pitches in short bursts, su as in the example below:



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