

The Trombone

Early History

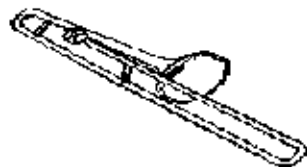
The term "trombone" comes from Italy. The word "tromba" means *trumpet* and "one" means *large*. So the trombone is truly a "large trumpet". The name is suitable for the instrument as it developed from an early version of the trumpet called a slide trumpet.

One of the earliest trombones was called the sackbut, which translates into "push-pull". It was first illustrated in the art of Burgundy in the 1500s. However, it was first officially used in England.



Later Developments

The first maker and player of the trombone was named Hans Neushel. His version of the trombone could only play four or five semitones (itches) for the slide length. The trombone of today can play seven semitones. Rather than its size, the shape of the instrument has not changed much since its original creation.



Beginning Players

The trombone is one of the more challenging brass instruments for beginner students. The following are some suggestions that would help new players with the horn:

1. Students should have a good sense of pitch. Those with prior musical knowledge (such as piano lessons) will find it easier to play the correct pitch.
2. New players should be strong enough to hold the instrument, particularly in the left arm as it supports almost the entire weight of the instrument.
3. Normal teeth, lip, and chip formation make it easier for students to learn the instrument. Students with overbites, under bites, crooked or straight teeth, or even thick or thin lips may have to adjust their mouth position to get a proper sound.
4. Students with braces may find it challenging as the braces could cut into the lip. Students can either modify mouth

position or purchase a Bracco Guard.

In Performance

Much like the trumpet, the trombone is an extremely useful instrument in all sorts of ensembles. Beethoven was the first composer to use the trombone in a piece of orchestral music (in his Fifth Symphony). The trombone is also very useful in concert and marching band.

The trombone has also been very popular in jazz music. Musicians Glenn Miller and Canadian Rob McConnell have made the trombone very popular in the big band.

Another use for the trombone has been in several styles of rock. Disco bands like K.C. and the Sunshine Band, funk bands like Sly and the Family Stone, and ska bands like Reel Big Fish have brought the trombone in the limelight of rock and roll history.

