ANDRE BRAUN’S GAMME ET METHODS POUR LES TROMBONNES: THE EARLIEST MODERN TROMBONE METHOD REDISCOVERED

Howard Weiner

The trombone of the Renaissance and Baroque was considered to be in A with four diatonic slide positions, the change to BI taking place during the second half of the 18th century. Until now the earliest documentary evidence of the modern system—B& with seven chromatic positions—was Joseph Frohlich’s Voila-und:” ge theoretisch-praktische Musikschule, published around 1811. Frohlich’s work is especially interesting in that he compares the two systems, but an earlier work describing the new system had to be assumed. Frohlich himself pointed the way by citing a Posaunenschule, a trombone method by Braun. A number of years ago, on the basis of Frohlich’s hint, I searched unsuccessfully for Braun’s trombone method. Taking up the search again last year, I was able to locate two early editions of Andre Braun’s work.

The full title of Braun’s method is Gamme et Methode pour les Trombonnes Alto, Tenor et Basse (Scale and Method for the Trombones, Alto, Tenor, and Bass), although the text carries on page 1 the heading "Gamme ou Methode pour apprendre le Basse Trombone" ("Scale or Method for Learning the Bass Trombone;" see Plate 2). The alto and tenor trombones, apart from being mentioned on the title page, each receive but a single page, containing a slide-position chart and several scales, while for the bass trombone we find three pages of text, a slide-position chart, and three pages of scales, exercises, and etudes. The bass was the most important of the trombones in France at the end of the 18th century. Guion has pointed out that in the operas of this time where only one trombone is required, it is invariably a bass, and that when three are called for, the bass often has more to play than the others.

The late-18th-century bass trombone was however not the Quart- or Quingmaune in use earlier, but rather what we would consider a large-bore tenor trombone. Frohlich wrote:

It is better, to be sure, when the construction of the trombones is different, so that the bass and tenor trombones are distinguished not in regard to their fundamentals, but certainly in regard to the size of the bell, the length of the pipe, etc., because the former has more to do with the low notes and the latter with middle notes. Such a difference is set forth in Braun’s Method for Trombone.

Actually, this difference is not described by Braun, but it is implicit in the separate slide charts for bass and tenor trombones, and in the use of different clefs and ranges. The tenor trombone is notated in tenor clef with BI as the lowest note, while the bass trombone is in
The bass clef with E as its lowest tone. The highest note for both is g'.

The title page of Braun's Gamme et Methode tells us only that he was a Membre du Conservatoire. Fétis supplies the first name "André," and states that he was of German origin. According to Fétis, Braun joined the orchestra of the Paris Opera as trombonist in 1797, after having been associated with that of the Theatre de la rue Feydeau for a number of years; in addition, Braun was professor at the Paris Conservatory from the time of its foundation. He retired in 1802 and died four years later (1806) in Paris.

The discussion which follows may or may not relate to the author of our method, but a connection seems likely. François Joseph Gossec claimed to have hired two German musicians, the Braun brothers, to perform on trumpet and trombone in the performance of his opera Sabinus in 1773:

It was necessary, in order to perform Sabinus, to have trumpets made in different keys and to hire two German musicians (the Braun brothers) to play them. These men, along with the Transylvanian Lowitz, also played the trombones.

The reliability of Gossec's statement concerning the use of trombones in Sabinus has often been questioned. Indeed, as we shall see below, the younger of the Braun brothers does not seem to have arrived on the Parisian musical scene until the 1776 season.

Shortly after the performance of Gossec's Sabinus, the trombone part in Christoph Willibald Gluck's opera Iphigénie en Aulide was performed in 1774 by a trombonist named Braun. (The part in question doubles the violoncello/basso part in scenes 6, 7, 8, and 9 of act 3, and is found only in a set of parts from 1775 preserved in the Bibliothèque de l'Opéra, Paris, Mat. 18 [139 (I-305)]). In August of the same year Braun was joined by the hornists Mozer and Sieber in playing the three trombone parts of Gluck's Orphée et Eurydice.

Interestingly the hornist (and sometime trombonist and harpist) Jean-Georges Seiber had not long before founded the firm which was to publish Braun's Gamme et Methode some twenty years later.

The Braun brothers, whom Gossec claimed to have employed in 1773, were mentioned regularly in the personnel lists of the Parisian orchestras in the Almanach des spectacles (published 1751-94, then irregularly to 1815). Braun Paine ("the elder") is listed as a trumpeter in the Concert spirituel from 1773 to 1790, and in the Opera from 1775 to 1793, doubling on trombone in 1780, and on trombone, bassoon, and contrabass in 1781. Braun cadet ("the younger") played trumpet in the Opera in 1776 and again from 1784 to 1792, and in the Concert spirituel from 1777 to 1790. The Almanach musical (1775-83) supplies the following information: during the years 1775-76 a trumpeter named Braun resided in the Hôtel des Mousquetaires. From 1777 to 1779 the Braun brothers lived on "rue Saint-Honoré, près de la Place de Louis XV." In 1783, now living separately, Braun Paine on "rue Montmartre, vis-a-vis le Café Deuphin," Braun cadet on rue de Richelieu; both brothers played horn and trumpet in the Concert spirituel. And finally, the Calendrier musical universel (1788-89) lists both of them under "cors, trombons, et trompettes" in the 1788
issue, and as "professeurs de cors, trombons et trompettes" in that of 1789.13 (Figure 1)

In spite of the seemingly unambiguous evidence of the title page and that from Fetis (who obviously had yet another source of information), Andre Braun's position at the Paris Conservatory presents something of a problem: his name does not appear on any of the surviving faculty lists for the time in question. The Conservatoire National evolved from the band of the Parisian National Guard. Preceded by the Free School of Music of the National Guard and the National Institute of Music, the Conservatory was established by decree of the National Convention on August 3, 1795.14 Constant Pierre does list a Braun as Professor of Solfege from 1794 to 1802, which would correspond with Fetis' information, but a document from March 1800 gives the first name "Jean-Frederic."13 Obviously not our man. Does this document perhaps supply us with the name of Andre's brother? This question must unfortunately remain unanswered at this time.

Andre Braun's Gamme et Methode was published by Jean-Georges Sieber sometime between 1792 and 1795. Robert MacDonald offers 1815 as the date of publication, but David Guion, without having seen Braun's method, correctly surmised that this date is at least five years too late.16 MacDonald was undoubtedly misled by the title page of the copy preserved in the Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris, bearing the imprint "Chez Sieber et Fils, Rue des filles St. Thomas No. 21, Quartier Feydeau" (Figure 2). Sieber et Fils is however not the
publishing house founded circa 1771 by Braun's colleague Jean-Georges Sieber, but rather
that of Sieber's son, Georges-Julien, who left his father's firm in 1799 in order to establish
his own business. Georges-Julien Sieber was located at the above address from 1812, which
would just about justify MacDonald's date of 1815. Yet as we shall see, even this must be
reconsidered.

On the bottom of page 4 of Braun's *Mithode* we find another imprint (Plate 5): "Chez
Sieber Musicien rue Honore entre celle des Vieille Etuve celle d'Orleans No. 85" ("Sieber,
musician, rue Honore, between [rue] Vielle Etuve and [rue] d'Orleans, No. 85;
" see Figure 3). It was at this address that Jean-Georges Sieber was located from 1782. The house
originally was numbered 92, but was renumbered 85 in 1792 or shortly thereafter. When
Georges-Julien joined his father around 1795 the firm became Sieber Pere et Fils. After
Georges-Julien's departure in 1799 the name was changed to Sieber Pere. Jean-Georges died
in 1822 and his business was taken over by Georges-Julien in 1824.17

Braun's work therefore must have been originally published by Jean-Georges Sieber
sometime after the revision of the house number in 1792 and before Georges-Julien entered
the family business in 1795 or thereabouts. If we assume that the designation "Membre du
Conservatoire" also appeared on the original title page, we could possibly narrow the date
of publication still further. As mentioned above, the Paris Conservatory was established by
decree on August 3, 1795. The *GammeetMethode* therefore could have been published after
this date, at some point during the remaining five months of 1795. Unfortunately the title
page of the first edition has not yet come to light. The copy preserved in the Bibliotheque
Nationale is a reprint, dating from after 1824. Georges Julien reprinted Braun's work,
employing the original plates, which had come into his possession in that year along with
his father's business; he then replaced the original title page with one containing his own
imprint.

As mentioned above, I was able to locate yet another edition of Braun's *Mithode*. It is
a bilingual (French-German) version published in 1811 by Johann Andre in Offenbach/
Main (Plates 11-13). The print itself is not dated, but a precise dating was made possible by
the fortunate circumstance that the firm of Johann Andre still exists today. Through this
source a confirmation of Braun's first name, here in the German form "Andreas," was
possible.18

Until now Joseph Frohlich was considered to be the first author to identify the tenor
trombone as an instrument in Bb rather than A, and also the first to describe the modem
system of seven chromatic slide positions as opposed to four diatonic positions.19
honor must now be bestowed upon Braun, who also anticipated Frohlich in discussing the proper manner of holding the instrument, alternate positions, and the bass trombone in BI.

As we can now see, Frohlich relied heavily on Braun, taking over a good deal of his text, musical examples, and illustrations. This is hardly surprising, however, since Frohlich did cite Braun, and the title page of the Volllstandige theoretisch-praktische Musikschule does state that he utilized "the best instructional methods to have appeared to date." Nevertheless, Frohlich remains an important source. His Posaumenschule is much more than a mere translation of Braun's Mithode, yet it is interesting to note what he did not take over from Braun.

In his Article 1, Braun lists the parts of the trombone. Frohlich reproduces this enumeration with the exception of item E: "small slide, which is inserted into the large branch and the bell branch." The corresponding letter "E" is also missing from Frohlich's illustration of the trombone (Figure 4). The petite coulisse shown here is no less than the first documented evidence of a tuning slide built into the bell section of a BI tenor/bass trombone. Consequently, Frohlich also did not make use of the information contained in Article 5 concerning the use of the tuning slide. Braun explains that the small slide is used to tune to an orchestra or to another instrument, that tuning in this manner does not disturb the placement of the positions on the main slide, and that a longer substitute slide can be used if the tuning is very low. As Anthony Baines wrote: "In France, in the time of Gossec, trombonists followed other wind players over from Germany....They would have been sharp to the French pitch, but the parts were simple and they managed." One manner of dealing with the problem was obviously the development, even before the end of the 18th century, of a tuning slide. Frohlich's failure to mention it may indicate that this device had not yet caught on in Germany by 1811.

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**Figure 4**
Illustrations of the tuning slide: Braun/Sieber, Braun/Andre, Frohlich
Differences in the translation of various terms would seem to indicate that Frohlich had a copy of the original Sieber edition rather than Andre's. Whereas Andre translates *Branche du Pavillon* ("bell branch") as *Rohre an der Stürze*, Frohlich refers to the *Röhre des Bechers*; likewise *Grande Coulisse* ("large slide") is *grosse Scheide* in Andre and *grosse Schieberöhre* in Frohlich. Frohlich also follows the Sieber edition in assigning letters to the slide positions on the alto and tenor trombone charts. The Andre edition numbers the positions, undoubtedly to avoid confusion: the French usage of solmization syllables would preclude mistaking a letter designating a slide position for one designating a pitch. In German as in English this would not be the case, at least for the "white-key" notes (Figure 5).

![Figure 5](image)

Both Frohlich and the Andre edition of Braun omit the seven interval exercises and five *Petite airs* found on pages 6-7 of the original (Plates 7-8), as well as the advertisement for a volume of exercises by F. Gebauer, which follows Article 12 (Plate 4). Frohlich further dispenses with the perhaps not-so-helpful set of lines (N) connecting the notes of the chromatic scales (L, M) with the drawing of the instrument (Plates 5 and 13; explained in
With the rediscovery of Andre Braun's *Gamme et Mithode pour les Trombonnes*, the appearance of the BI tenor (and the 13 alto) trombone can now be documented before the end of the 18th century. The transition from A to BI trombone probably took place in Vienna sometime earlier in the century. The appearance of the instrument in its form in Paris, where the trombone had long been neglected, is undoubtedly connected with its probable reintroduction to the Parisian musical scene by the Viennese composer Christoph Willibald Gluck in 1774. Of more practical importance is Braun's identification of the bass trombone as an instrument in BI, and the resulting ramifications for the performance of trombone parts in late-18th-century and early-19th-century French music. Indeed, a reconsideration of the "classical" formation of alto, tenor, and bass trombones becomes necessary, and may well necessitate a more differentiated makeup of the trombone group in those orchestras employing period instruments.

The following transcription and translation of the *Gamme et Mithode* are based on the Sieber edition. In the transcription I have attempted to present the text as it appears in the original, complete with mistakes and orthographical idiosyncrasies, such as the almost consistent spelling of degree with two accents: `degre`. Variant readings from the Andre edition are given in endnotes, which are identified by superscript letters rather than numbers in order to distinguish them from the notes for the main body of the article.
Gamme ou Methode
pour apprendre la Basse Trombone

Art. Ier
Figure de l'instrument et detail nominatif
de chaque piece et les divisions.
A Branche du Pavillon.
B Grande Branche.
C Branche de l'embouchure.
D Grande Coulisse, qui s'enchassee dans
la grande Branche, et dans celle de
l'embouchure.
E Petite Coulisse qui est enchassee dans
la Branche du Pavillon et grande Branche.
F Embouchure.
G Petite traverse, qui tient la grande
Branche et celle de l'embouchure.
H Petite traverse, qui tient la grande
coulisse seulement ensemble.

Art. 2me
Cet Instrument tout ensemble montea
pour jouer, les trois branches /A B C/
doivent etre tournes en triangle oo ;
c'est 3 dire que la grande branche et le
pavilion egales de hauteurb au dessous
et la branche de l'embouchure eleve en
dessus.

Art. 3me
On dent l'instrument avec la main
gauche par la petite traverse /G/ de
maniere d'etre tout pret a presser
l'embouchure sur la bouche pour
jouer.

Scale or Method
for learning the Bass Trombone

Art[icle] 1
Form of the instrument, the names of the
parts, and the positions.
A Bell branch.
B Large branch.
C Mouthpipe.
D Large slide, into which the large
branch and the mouthpipe are inserted.
E Small slide, which is inserted into the
large branch and the bell branch.
F Mouthpiece.
G Small stay, which connects the large
branch with the mouthpipe.
H Small stay, which holds the large slide
together.

Art 2
The instrument being now completely
assembled for play, the three branches
(ABC) must form a triangle 00 ; that
is to say, with the large branch and the
bell branch on the same plane below
and the mouthpipe above.

Art 3
One holds the instrument by the small
stay (G) with the left hand, so as to be
ready to press the mouthpiece onto the
mouth in order to play.
Art. 4
The large slide is held with the right hand by the small stay (H). This slide is movable, being pushed and pulled as required, also being held in one position according to the length of the note to be played.

Art. 5
The small slide (E) is used only to tune to an orchestra or instrument the tuning of which is sometimes found to be too high or too low. Tuning in this manner allows the rest of the instrument to remain stable; that is to say, the placement of the positions is not disturbed. If the tuning of the orchestra is very low, one inserts another [somewhat longer] slide in place of the usual one in order to lower the pitch of the instrument.

Art. 6
The instrument has seven positions progressing by semitone steps (see Example J), and it is according to these positions that the large slide is moved back and forth, whereby one must carefully observe where the positions are located, otherwise it will not be possible to play in tune. The movement of the slide must be very light and smooth so as not to disturb the placement of the mouthpiece.
Art. 7
When the large slide is completely closed, this is the first position and the instrument is in $\text{Si}'$; when in the 2nd, $A$; in the 3rd, $A^1$; in the 4th, $G$; in the 5th, $F'$; in the 6th, $F$; and in the 7th, $E$. Each of these positions naturally produces five or six different tones without the slide having to be moved (see Example K). The first position has B1 and produces the fifth above, which is F, the octave $C^1$, the tenth D, the twelfth F, etc. Each position produces its tones according to the same proportion. To produce the higher tones, the lips are pressed together a bit more tightly each time, thus reducing the amount of air and bringing forth each time a higher tone. To descend is just the opposite: the lips relax and the amount of air is proportionally increased according to how low and loud the tone must be.

Art. 8
The range of the instrument reaches from E, one ledger line below the staff, to G, three ledger lines above the staff, and includes all intermediate tones and semitones (see Example L).
Art. 9
In order to avoid confusion, the scale in Example L shows the natural tones of the instrument. The scale below this (Example M) displays the sharped and flatted tones that although written differently have the same pitch, and are played in the same position on the instrument; for example, Fli and 0 are in the same position, [as are] Al and al, etc. (see Examples L, M).

Art. 10
The lines between the drawing of the instrument and scales described above show the movement of the large slide. Each line connects the note with its position on the instrument (see Example N). The number below each note indicates the position in which the note is played. The movements of the slide must be quick. The notes which have two numbers can be played in either of the two positions, the choice being dependent on the passage in question. One should always employ the nearest position in order to avoid a slowing down of the execution.

Art. 11
Examples dealing with the five tones in the first position, of which the lowesth is B1. One descends step by step to the seventh position, ascending in the same manner (see Example P). The second note is F, which one plays in the same position as the first, except that the lips must be pressed more tightly together, increasing the air pressure in order to spring a fifth higher (see Example Q).

Art. 9me
Cette gamme est faite selon la nature de l'Instrument pour eviter la confusion, et au dessous il y a une Gamme qui enseigne les notes diezes & Bemolissees du degre le plus proche qui devient le meme son, et qui se font sur les meme degres sur l'instrument, comme fa dieze et Sol' se sont sur le meme degre, la' & sol# de meme & / voyez Exemple L.M./

Art. 10m.
Les rayes qu'ont voit entre la figure de l'Instrument et la gamme sont pour enseigner la marche directe que doit faire la grande coulisse; en suivant la raye de la note jusqu'au degre de l'instrument / voyez Exp: N/ les chiffres au dessous de chaque notes, indique le degre sur le quel la note doit etre faite, et il faut pousser avec promptitnde la grande coulisse 3 ce degre /voyez l'Exp: N 0/ les notes qui ont un double chiffre se font de deux manieres le choix depend au passagef de Musique, et on prend toujours le dege le plus voisin, pour eviter les retards dans l'execution.

Art. 11me
Exemple sur les cinq notes du premier degre; dont la plus basse est Si,g on descend par degre conjoint jusqu'au 7me et on remonte de meme /voyez l'Exp: P / la deuxieme note qui est fa, on se sert des memes degres comme du premier, il faut seulement pincer les levres et renforcer le vent etant une quinte plus haute / voyez l'Exp. Q/ ainsi des trois autres qui suivent, cela
fait connoitre que le meme degre produit chaque fois d'autres sons par le moyen de ses levres a force proportionne du vent.

Likewise for the three [examples] which follow. One sees that in each position it is possible to produce different tones each time by means of regulating the air pressure with the lips.

Art. 12
Different scales in major and minor.
One must take care to place the slide correctly, to articulate each note clearly, and to hold the tones at an even dynamic level for their full value.

Note: There is a very useful work that can be used following this method. It is entitled 50 Easy and Progressive Lessons in the Most Common Major and Minor Tonalities. Composed by F. Gebauer, it includes ten pieces or trios for three trombones.

NOTES FOR TRANSCRIPTION AND TRANSLATION OF BRAUN'S TEXT

a Andre: "L'instrument joint ensemble et monte."

b Andre: "le pavilion soient egales en hauteur"

Andre: "de maniere 3 pouvoir porter (’embouchure sur la bouche"

d Andre: "une second petite coulisse dont on se sert"

c Andre: "il en est de meme des autres degres a proportion. Pour faire les sons plus aigus it faut pincer chaque fois les levres un peu plus, vela amincit a proportion k vent"

f Andre: "du passage"

S Andre: "dont la plus aigue [sic] est Sil’

h Andre: "highest" [ski]
Andre: "Il faut avoir soin de bien ajuster le degre, d'attaquer fermement chaque note, et de tenir les sons d'une force tale pendant toute la valeur de la note."

NOTES


8. Cucuel, Etudes, p. 35.


10. Cucuel, Etudes, p. 35.

11. Jan LaRue and Howard Brofsky, "Parisian Brass Players, 1751-1793," Brass Quarterly 3

13. Ibid., pp. [2510-11, 2874-75].


15. Ibid., p. 230.


18. Personal correspondence, July 19, 1992. I should like to take this opportunity to thank the firm of Johann Andre, Offenbach, as well as the Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris, for permitting reproductions from the editions in their respective collections.

19. See note 1.


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Bass e Tenor et Alto

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Plate 11

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pour apprendre la 13 itte Trombonne.

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Plate 12
Plate 13