METHOD BOOKS FOR SLIDE TRUMPET:
AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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The “modern” slide trumpet played an important role in England from the end of the 18th century until the 1880s; it was also used in France for a few decades, but with little success.¹

There were some predecessors, such as the Baroque “Tromba da tirarsi,” and it is also fairly certain that the slide trumpet existed in the Renaissance.² These instruments had a slide in the form of a long telescopic mouthpiece. The trumpet was pushed to and fro along the inner pipe, to which the mouthpiece was securely attached; only one instrument (from 1651) has survived.³ The English “flat trumpet,”⁴ which was used from the last decades of the 17th century up to about 1720, has its slide in the upper bend (which faces the player). This facilitates playing because the slide distances are reduced by half.

The English slide trumpet of the 19th century was similar: it had its slide in the upper bend, but it also featured a resetting mechanism. The first instrument was introduced by Woodham and Hyde in the 1790s.⁵ It was popular primarily because of the authority of the important trumpeters Thomas Harper Sr. (1786-1853) and Jr. (1816-1898), who used the slide trumpet, in spite of the existence of of the new valve trumpet, up to about 1885. This instrument was capable of lowering each natural tone by one or two semitones, although it was used at first primarily to correct the intonation of the open tones and for a few additional notes.

After playing a similar instrument on the continent⁶ made by François Riedloker,⁷ which was later improved by David Buhl (1781-1860),⁸ the famous trumpeter François Georges Auguste Dauverné (1800-1874) introduced the French model of the slide trumpet in the 1830s. It used no resetting mechanism, though it did have a locking mechanism, and it offered an alternative to the shorter crooks when only natural tones were required. The slide operated like that of a trombone and was capable of lowering each natural tone by three semitones.

The slide trumpet played an important role in the development of the brass family of instruments. The chief advantage of the slide trumpet was that, unlike the keyed trumpet and the hand-stopped natural trumpet, the quality of the tone was not affected.⁹ The disadvantages of this instrument were the ponderousness of the slide mechanism and the risk that the mouthpiece would be dislodged or ejected through the use of the slide.

This article lists for the first time¹⁰ all method books for the 19th-century slide trumpet in England and France that could be verified. It further gives, where possible, the location of each as well as a short description.¹¹ “Location” is used to indicate public libraries or private archives that own these method books, but it was not my intention to find all copies of a method. Contents are indicated in the following manner: “6 pp. (1T, 5M)” indicates that the tutor has six pages, one of text and five of music. It is sometimes only
an approximate description, because some authors freely mix text and music. Text pages also cover rudiments of music; blank or nearly blank pages are also counted. If only part of the work is devoted to the slide trumpet, an appropriate indication is made. Concerning descriptions of sections for natural trumpet, see my article previously published in the *Historic Brass Society Journal*.

Method books for slide trumpet


This is the most important 19th-century method for trumpet and, apart from the single-page *Tabulature* by Legram, the only one for slide trumpet in France. This tutor contains a comprehensive and significant historical summary on the trumpet, a large section for the natural trumpet, and also a section for the valve trumpet.

Dauverné improved the slide trumpet. Although his instrument had no resetting mechanism, it had nevertheless a locking mechanism, which offered an alternative to the shorter crooks when only natural tones were played. The slide was similar to that of a trombone. The first position was, as on the trombone, the closed slide; the second lowered the pitch of the instrument by one semitone and the player had to extend the slide 6 cm. For the third position an extension of 14 cm was required in order to obtain two semitones;
the fourth position, for three semitones, used the entire length of the slide. The left hand held the instrument, while the right moved the slide.

Figure 1
Models of the English slide trumpet (left) and the French slide trumpet (right) in Dauverné, *Méthode pour la Trompette*, p. xxv, Planche III, no. 6 and 7.

Figure 2
The tutor contains sixteen easy studies intended to acquaint the player with the slide, as well as thirty-six additional Exercises. Dauverné also teaches the lip trill, the mordent, and the turn. The section for slide trumpet ends with twelve melodic studies that can be used with the valve trumpet as well.

HARPER Thomas (Sr.). Instructions / FOR THE / TRUMPET / With the use of the Chromatic Slide / Also the / Russian Valve Trumpet, / THE / CORNET A PISTONS OR SMALL STOP TRUMPET, / AND THE / Keyed Bugle, / In which the RUDIMENTS of MUSIC and the / VARIOUS SCALES, / Are clearly explained in a SERIES of / Examples, Preludes, Lessons, Solos, Duets & c. / for each Instrument, / Composed, Arranged, and Dedicated (by Permission) TO / The Right Hon’dble. / General Lord Hill / Commander in Chief, / By / THOMAS HARPER / Professor of the Trumpet at the Royal Academy of Music, First Trumpet at the King’s Theatre, Philharmonic Concerts & c. London: Author, 1st ed. 1835; 2d ed. 1837. Location: 1st ed.: Kremsmünster (Austria), Schloß Kremsegg, Streitwieser Foundation; London, British Library - h.2202.e; Cambridge, University of Cambridge, Pendlebury Library of Music; 2nd ed.: London, British Library - h.2202.f; London, Royal College of Music. Facsimile Reprint edited by John Webb and Scott Sorenson (Homer, NY: Spring Tree Enterprises, 1988). 1st ed.: 68 pp. (20 T, 48 M); 2nd ed.: 69 pp. (21 T, 48 M); for the slide trumpet in both editions including a general instructive text and some exercises and duets for natural trumpet: 36 pp. (13 T, 23 M).

Thomas Harper Sr. wrote this method book, which seems to be the most important tutor for slide trumpet, as well as one of the most comprehensive trumpet tutors in England in the nineteenth century. This method book also contains instructions for valve trumpet, valve cornet, and keyed bugle. The second edition ends with one additional page for the “cornetto” and contains another portrait of Harper; there are also some minor changes, especially in the section for valve cornet.

The tutor begins with the rudiments of music and some observations about the different crooks used with the trumpet. Harper includes the most detailed illustration and description of a mouthpiece of all method books in the 19th century. He gives useful instructions for the “Position of the Performer and Manner of Holding T. Harper’s Improved Chromatic Slide Trumpet.” Harper was in touch with Muzio Clementi until the latter’s death in 1832. In 1833 Harper entered into a contract with John Köhler in London, who built the “T. Harper’s Improved” model.

It is difficult to say what major improvements were made by Harper and Köhler. Cynthia Adams Hoover supposes that the replacement of clocksprings with spiral springs was Harper’s idea. Perhaps the “elastic cord model” was also his doing. He may have contributed some advice on bore sizes, metals, etc. Scott Sorenson assumes that “the legend ‘Harper’s Improved’ was merely an endorsement of quality as no patents exist for these instruments. Throughout the period of use of the ‘Harper’s Improved’ model, other makers produced similar clock-spring and elastic-cord slide trumpets.”
Harper offers detailed instructions for the “Method of Tongueing [sic] and Blowing the Trumpet.” The student should begin first with long tones on c’. Of the embouchure, he writes:

Embouchure
or Form of the Mouth and Lips and Method of Adjusting the Mouthpiece

Apply the Mouthpiece to the Centre of the Lips, (two thirds resting on the upper lip) at the same time introduce the tongue between the teeth (the lip just touching the upper lip) press and slide the Mouthpiece nearly one third down the upper lip, the part on the under lip remaining, and tighten the lips across the teeth: Thus a good position of the mouthpiece on the lips will be obtained, and sufficient space left for the tongue to act and the breath to pass freely into the Trumpet. The pupil should practise the above with the Mouthpiece only, (and without sound) so as to obtain in the first instance the correct position.\(^{21}\)

The first thirty studies are for the natural trumpet without the use of the slide, because “the Pupil is advised not to use the Slide ‘till he is nearly perfect in the fixed tones of the trumpet.”\(^{22}\) In contrast to many other tutors of the 19th century, Harper does not use the entire compass of the instrument immediately; he increases the range gradually, allowing the embouchure to develop step by step.

Concerning the use of the slide, he gives the following instructions:

The Slide perfects the fourth and sixth [notes] of the third octave,\(^{23}\) […] for which purpose it must be drawn out about one Inch and a half. The Slide also gives half a tone\(^{24}\) below each fixed tone in all its Keys. In the Keys of F, E, Eb, and D, the Slide must be drawn out nearly half way, and for the Keys of Db, C, B, Bb, A and Ab, two thirds; Two or three whole tones\(^{25}\) may be obtained by the full length of the Slide, but as they incline to be sharp they are generally used as passing notes.\(^{26}\)

But Harper seldom used these notes in his tutor. He adds that “the length of the Slide being taken according to the foregoing directions, the Ear of the Performer will enable him to discover when the Notes made by the use of the Slide are in tune with the Natural Notes of the Instrument.”\(^{27}\)

Twenty studies requiring the slide, including some transcriptions of works by Mozart, Rossini and Sigismund Neukomm (1778-1858), are provided. Harper specifies a crook for each piece. The method book also contains “Twelve Progressive Duets”; nos. 1-3 do not use the slide. The section of the tutor for slide trumpet ends with three pieces for brass ensemble requiring four trumpets, one trombone, and timpani.
Harper Jr.’s tutor for valve cornet, published in 1865, preceded his method book for slide trumpet. It was not the last tutor for slide trumpet, as is stated in some sources, but Harper Jr. was the last eminent slide trumpet player. The tutor contains a picture of the author playing his instrument and an informative preface. Harper discusses the differences between trumpet and cornet and he rejects the contemporary practice of playing trumpet parts on the cornet.

Harper does not cover the rudiments of music, but advises “the student to obtain some little proficiency on another and more facile instrument (say, the Pianoforte) before attempting to play on the Trumpet.” He includes a detailed description on the slide trumpet and the mouthpiece. Harper explains that crooks for F, E, Eb, D and C are sufficient for general purposes although there are also crooks for Db, B and Bb.

Some of his instructions are quite similar to those of his father, especially concerning
the manner of holding the instrument, the embouchure, the method of tonguing, including double and triple tonguing, and the use of the slide. Like his father, Harper Jr. occasionally calls for lowering the natural tones by two semitones if only short crooks are attached, e.g. to obtain f’. He states that “it will therefore be seen that the required length of slide for certain notes, varies with each change of crook, consequently when it is necessary to extend the slide, the ‘Ear’ must assist the fingers.”

Harper’s “100 Progressive Exercises,” though mostly original, contain some studies that are similar to those of his father, and even a few that are identical. Another version of Harper Jr.’s studies was published in the cornet tutor. The studies are organized in two sections. The first uses only the natural notes; in addition to the notes found in the studies in his father’s tutor, Harper the younger uses b♭’ in this section. Studies 51-100 require the slide. Harper frequently uses notes that involve lowering the naturals by two semitones, especially d’. In addition to works (or transcriptions) by such composers as Walch, Sigismund Neukomm (1778-1858), E. Perry, and Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713), he includes pieces by the famous slide trumpeter John Thompson Norton. Harper Jr.’s studies are rather difficult to play and many use less common key signatures.

Figure 4
Thomas John Norton as Professor of Trumpet at the Royal Academy of Music in his Preceptor.
Difficult study for the slide trumpet written by Harper the younger in his

*School for the Trumpet*, p. 47.

This is the last method book published for the English slide trumpet. In contrast to the tutors by Hyde and the Harpers, which are written mainly for professionals, this method book is appropriate for amateur musicians. Like many other 19th-century tutors published in Paris and London for cornet with valves, it contains a survey of the rudiments of music, short instructions on producing a tone, a few easy studies, and many popular tunes and easy airs from well-known operas or similar works.

Following “The First Principles of Music” there are three pages with a fingering chart for the valve trumpet. The section for slide trumpet shows an instrument made by Hawkes & Son in London, which has a spring to draw the slide back to its normal position. Three positions are shown: closed slide, for natural tones; “slide half out,” lowering the pitch a
semitone; and “slide quite out,” lowering it by two semitones. The tutor explains that notes that are too sharp or too flat require correction by means of the slide. The method book mentions five crooks: F, E, Eb, D and C.

The section containing musical studies is intended for both valve and slide trumpet, for which fingerings and slide positions are provided, respectively. The “first exercises,” employing only natural tones, are followed by major and minor scales and easy studies. “A selection of Popular Music” with thirty-three tunes follows. Some of these pieces, especially those with grace notes, would be difficult to play on the slide trumpet for a student who has mastered only the few easy studies.

This method was perhaps sold as a first instruction book together with instruments made by Hawkes and Son.


These two very similar editions are the earliest English methods for trumpet and bugle. The section for slide trumpet is the earliest method for the instrument ever published, but only the last four pages of the tutor require the use of the slide.

In his “Observations on the Chromatic Trumpet,” Hyde claims himself to be the inventor of the slide trumpet⁴² and says that the instrument was made by Woodham.⁴³ He writes that “Dr. Burney, in his History of Music,⁴⁴ has taken particular notice of the imperfect fourth and sixth [scale degrees of the natural trumpet], which imperfection is compleatly remedied by the Chromatic trumpet.”⁴⁵ He further maintains that “before the Learner makes use of the Chromatic Trumpet, he should make himself Master of the plain one”,⁴⁶ thus the greater part of the book is devoted to the natural trumpet.

The scale in Figure 6 reveals that, like other early English sources, Hyde treats the

![Figure 6](image_url)

*Figure 6*

Scale for the slide trumpet by Hyde in his *Preceptor*, p. 51.
trumpet not as a transposing instrument but rather as it sounds. He uses the slide only to correct the eleventh and thirteenth harmonics and to lower natural notes by one semitone.

The section for slide trumpet contains five studies, one duet, and one trio. Hyde states that the trumpeter may “adopt any Air to his own playing, that lies within the Compass of the Scale.”

LEGRAM H.[?] TABULATURE / Dessé pour la Trompette à coulisse mécanique. [“Fingering chart” prepared for the mechanical slide trumpet.] Paris: François Riedloker, 1821.

Location: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale. 1 p. (1 T).

The earliest French tutor for the slide trumpet, Legram’s tutor precedes the important method book of Thomas Harper Sr. as well. It consists of a single page showing the instrument, a chart with slide positions, and very brief instructions. Like Dauverné, Legram lowers each natural tone by as much as three semitones and uses trombone-like slide positions. It is obvious that Dauverné’s slide trumpet was not primarily influenced by Hyde, as he states in his Méthode pour la Trompette, but rather by Legram or Buhl, who made further changes to the instrument. Chladni published an article on Legram’s instrument in 1821.


Norton’s tutor covers the rudiments of music and contains sixteen studies and twelve duets. He uses the slide drawn out two and a half inches to correct f’’ and a’’ and to produce semitones below natural tones. Some of his pieces require only natural tones, or only a few additional notes. The four “Studios” at the end of the tutor, “for the purpose of making the pupil familiar with the use of the slide,” are quite difficult.


Although published in 1880, the main section of this tutor is for natural trumpet. It includes abbreviated instructions based on those in Dauverné’s method book (see above) for the “French System” slide trumpet, and also four studies taken from the “12 Études mélodiques,” for both valve and slide trumpets, from Dauverné’s tutor.

This method book also contains a “Scale for the Slide Trumpet. English system”; no additional information is offered. Judging from the notes used, the scale is intended for an instrument capable of lowering natural tones by only one semitone.
NOTES


3 A slide trumpet made by Hans Veit, which was used in the Wenzelskirche in Naumburg in Saxony, is now no. 639 in the Musikinstrumenten-Museum (Staatliches Institut für Musikforschung) in Berlin.


5 Woodham was a watchmaker and probably made only the spring box.


8 According to the *Revue musicale* (May 18, 1833, pp. 123-124), this slide trumpet was tested by the Institut de France in Paris.

9 Dauverné regarded the tone of the slide trumpet as better than the tone of the valve instrument (*Méthode pour la Trompette* [Paris: G. Brandus, Dufour et Cie.; Saint Petersburg: Brandus, 1857], p. 158).


11 This was a part of the author’s dissertation, *Ein Überblick über die Trompeten- und Kornettschulen in Frankreich, England, Italien, Deutschland und Österreich von ca. 1800 bis ca. 1880* [A survey of method books for trumpet and cornet in France, England, Italy, Germany and Austria between ca. 1800 and ca. 1880], Ph.D. diss., University of Vienna, 1989. It was not possible to locate any method book for slide trumpet in Italy, Germany, or Austria because this instrument was only used in England and France. An exception is the double-slide instrument made by Michael Saurle of Munich, now located in the Musical Instrument Museum of the Stadtmuseum, Munich; see *The New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments* 3: 404 for an illustration.


15 Formerly at Pottstown, PA. The author is very grateful to Franz-Xaver Streitwieser for a photocopy of this tutor.

16 See John Webb’s foreword to the facsimile edition, pp. xii–xiii.


19 Private communication with Arthur Brownlow.


21 Harper (Sr.), *Instructions*, p. 12.

22 Ibid., p. 11.

23 f” and a”.

24 i.e., a semitone.

25 i.e., semitones.

26 Harper (Sr.), *Instructions*, p. 11.

27 Ibid., p. 11.


29 The author is very grateful to Franz-Xaver Streitwieser for a photocopy of this tutor.

30 *Harper’s School for the Cornet à pistons*.


32 Harper (Jr.), *School for the Trumpet*, Preface, p. 3.

33 Ibid., p. 4.

34 This is the German composer Johann Heinrich Walch (1776-1855).

35 This is perhaps the English composer George Frederick Perry (1793-1862).


37 The author is very grateful to Arthur Brownlow for a photocopy of this tutor.


40 Concerning the date of publication cf. Albert R. Rice’s “A Selection of Instrumental and Vocal Tutors and Treatises Entered at Stationers’ Hall from 1789 to 1818,” *Galpin Society Journal* 41 (1988): 16–23. Rice states that this method was registered by Stationer’s Hall 01/26/1799 (p. 19). The author is very grateful to Edward H. Tarr for this reference.

41 The author is very grateful to Franz-Xaver Streitwieser for a photocopy of this tutor.

42 Hyde, Preceptor, p. 51. The “flat trumpet,” which was developed in the late 17th and the beginning of the 18th centuries, was not in use in the last decades of the 18th century. But Arthur Brownlow
states that surely either some old flat trumpets were still around or at least stories about them persisted among trumpeters (private communication from Arthur Brownlow).


47 Ibid.


50xxi. See also Hoover, “Slide Trumpet,” p. 173.


52 See Hoover, “Trumpet Battle,” and see also the description of the method book by Harper the younger.

53 The tutor contains a picture of Norton stating that he was “Professor of the Trumpet at the Royal Academy of Music.” The Royal Academy was founded in 1822 and Norton was probably the first trumpet teacher there. He remained in the Academy until his emigration to the USA in 1828. The author is very grateful to Crispian Steele-Perkins for his valuable information about Norton and for his assistance in obtaining a copy of this tutor.