

THE EARLIEST FRENCH TUTOR FOR SLIDE TRUMPET

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The Bibliothèque Nationale of Paris has a very small but interesting “tutor” for slide trumpet, entitled *Tablature dressée pour la trompette à coulisse mécanique*—the earliest French tutor for this instrument. It consists of a single sheet, which is reproduced in Figure 1. The slide trumpet played an important role in the development of the brass family of instruments. During the 19th century it was particularly popular in England, where its use can be documented through the ‘80’s, primarily on the authority of Thomas Harper father (1756-1853) and son (1816-1898).¹ The instrument was invented by John Hyde, principal trumpet at the Opera and at the King’s Concerts of Ancient Music in London, and built by an instrument maker named Woodham. The instrument had its slide in the upper bend (which faces the player) and featured a resetting mechanism. Hyde used the slide to correct the intonation of the natural tones and to lower the naturals by a semitone,² while Thomas Harper, Sr. lowered the open tones by a whole step as well.³

The slide trumpet enjoyed less success in France, though it is frequently mentioned in connection with François Georges Auguste Dauverné (1800-1874),⁴ who proclaimed an essential improvement of this system around 1840.⁵ Dauverné’s slide operated like that of a trombone, and his instrument had no resetting mechanism, though it did have a locking mechanism. It offered an alternative to the shorter crooks when natural tones only were required.⁶ This slide trumpet was capable lowering each natural tone by three semitones.⁷

Documentation is sparse, but the slide trumpet must have existed in France prior to the introduction of Dauverné’s system.⁸ It is probable that Dauverné knew not only Hyde’s instrument, mentioned above, but also earlier French models of the slide trumpet.⁹ In 1833 the *Revue Musicale* reported that the leading French trumpeter David Buhl (1781-1860)—Dauverné’s uncle—had invented a slide trumpet, which was derived from a still earlier model.¹⁰ The earlier instrument, according to the *Revue*, had several disadvantages, among them a slide that was too long and a resetting mechanism consisting of a catgut string conducted over a reel. The system was widely criticized and therefore soon fell into oblivion. Buhl had overcome these disadvantages, according to the report, though further details are lacking. Instead, this short article contains a test report from the *Institut de France*, dated May 8, 1833, which indicates that only the slide trumpet from Buhl—and not the instruments with keys or with valves—has the true sound of the trumpet.¹¹ According to Lyndesay G. Langwill, instruments of this type were produced by Courtois, and later by Adolphe Sax.¹²

H. Lavoix writes in his *Histoire de l’instrumentation* that Buhl played this slide

TABLATURE

Dressé pour la Trompette à coulisse mécanique inventée par M. Legendre, Harmonie de la Grande Chapelle.

Explication

La première position est celle que le joueur se forme, dans le système ordinaire dans la trompette ordinaire et on lui donne le premier instrument la seconde position à lui en tirant le coulisse à peu près deux pouces en dehors, toutes les notes du système sont alors d'un ton plus bas que le ton de la première position.

La troisième position à lui en tirant le coulisse à peu près le quatre pouces, toutes les notes du système sont alors d'un ton plus bas que le ton de la première position.

La quatrième position à lui lorsque le coulisse est tiré à peu près de six pouces et demi, toutes les notes du système sont alors à une tierce mineure plus bas que le ton de la première position.

La Trompette à coulisse et le corset se trouvent chez M^{rs} Biedeker, Imprimeur de la Tablature.

Editeur, Librairie de musique, rue de Valenciennes, N^o 5, à Paris. Prix 5^{fr}

Figure 1
Legram, *Tablature Dressé pour la Trompette à coulisse mécanique ... Paris, [1821?]*

trumpet in public but without great success.¹³ He further states that Buhl's slide trumpet derived from an earlier model: "In 1823 Legrain,¹⁴ director of the band of the 7th infantry regiment of the Royal Guards, adopted Haltenhoff's¹⁵ system of returning slides for the manufacture of diatonic trumpets."¹⁶ According to Lavoix it was to this instrument that Dauverné applied his improvements, and not that of Hyde, as Dauverné reports in his tutor.¹⁷ Lavoix refers to Dauverné's tutor, with its section on the slide trumpet, but he further cites a *Tablature dressée pour la trompette a coulisse mécanique* by "Legrain."¹⁸ Though hitherto unknown among trumpet scholars, it is the earliest French tutor for slide trumpet and moreover the oldest tutor for this instrument outside England.¹⁹

Legram was a musician of the 7th infantry regiment of the Guards,²⁰ according to Lichtenthal²¹; and a conductor, according to Lavoix.²² Together with the brass-instrument maker François Riedloker²³ he developed the first French slide trumpet, an accomplishment documented in Legram's *Tablature* (Figure 1 shows Riedloker's name in the two bottom lines) and in Chaldni's article in the Leipzig *AMZ*. The latter also mentions Riedloker as maker of this slide trumpet, and offers a description of the instrument; both sources contain identical illustrations.

Legram...ordered the manufacture of trumpets that can produce all semitones of the scale from the lowest g of the violin to the c [i.e., c'] with the aid of a slide with a spring, which can be moved with the thumb of the right hand.²⁴ The slide is pulled out 2", 4", or 6 1/2" (and in this manner the longitudinal vibrating air column inside the trumpet is extended) and the whole tone system of the trumpet with closed slide is lowered by a semitone, one whole-tone or a minor third.²⁵

Lavoix apparently knew neither the *Tablature* nor Legram's instrument in detail, for he writes that only Dauverné's slide system permitted the lowering of open tones by three semitones, while Legram's and also Buhl's improved version lacked these advantages: "These slides produce only a whole tone and a semitone; our excellent trumpeter Dauverné has given them three semitones through the invention of one additional slide position."²⁶

The date of publication for the *Tablature* can be placed with relative certainty in the year 1821. Legram applied for a patent for his slide trumpet in that year,²⁷ and Chladni's article regarding "recent inventions and improvements" ("neueren Erfindungen und Verbesserungen musikalischer Instrumente")²⁸ was also published in 1821. Mention of the *Tablature* in the *Bibliographie musicale*²⁹ from 1822 lends support to this date.

The *Tablature* consists of a single sheet (Figure 1), which illustrates the Legram's instrument and shows the slide positions for each tone. The numeral "1" indicates natural notes with slide closed. The numeral "2" indicates tones which can be obtained when the slide is drawn out 2 inches, while "3" shows each natural tone lowered by a whole tone, with the slide drawn out 4 inches. The fourth slide position (figure 4) lowers the

natural tones by a minor third by drawing out the slide 6 1/2 inches. The two descriptions of the instrument—one from the *Tablature*, the other from Chladni—are not appreciably different. The extensive range, to c^{'''}, is significant; comparable tutors of this time in France describe notes at least above g^{''} as *peu praticables* (scarcely usable).³⁰ Gobert³¹ and Cam³² simply avoid these notes in their practical material.

The slide trumpet is admittedly of relatively little importance in France, and the “tutor” for slide trumpet discussed herein consists of no more than a single page. Nevertheless, this brief document is noteworthy, for it proves the existence of French slide trumpets prior to Dauverné’s improvements.

NOTES

1. See Cynthia Adams Hoover, “The Slide Trumpet of the Nineteenth Century, *Brass Quarterly* 6, no. 4 (1964): 159-190.
2. See John Hyde, *A New and Compleat Preceptor for the Trumpet and Bugle Horn* (London: the author, ca. 1799; London, Whatkaer, ²1800?).
3. See Thomas Harper, Sr., *Instructions for the Trumpet* (London: the author, 1835; ²1837). The edition of 1837 also appears in a facsimile-edition with commentary, edited by Ralph T. and Virginia B. Dudgeon (Homer, NY: Spring Tree Enterprises, 1988).
4. First documented in the *Revue Musicale*, 1850, p. 224, and also in Dauverné’s famous tutor, *Méthode pour la Trompette* (Paris: G. Brandus, 1857), pp. xxi ff. and p. xxv, no. 7. See also the English translation of the text of this tutor in *Historic Brass Society Journal*, 3 (1991): 179 ff.
5. See Philip Bate, *The Trumpet and the Trombone* (London: Ernst Benn, 1978), p. 124; and Emilie Mende, *Pictorial Family Tree of Brass Instruments in Europe since the Early Middle Ages* (Bulle, Switzerland: BIM, 1978), p. 16.
6. Cf. Bate, *Trumpet and Trombone*, p. 124.
7. Dauverné, *Méthode*, p. 158 ff.
8. Anthony Baines, *Brass Instruments: Their History and Development* (London: Faber and Faber, 1978), p. 184.
9. Hoover (“Slide Trumpet,” p. 173) suggests that Dauverné’s slide trumpet owes little to English models, but he found it profitable to connect his improvements with the famous English trumpeters. Dauverné (*Méthode*, p. xxi) speaks of Hyde as *célèbre professeur anglais* (“famous English professor”), to whom he attributes the invention of the slide trumpet.

10. *Revue musicale*, May 18, 1833, pp. 123 ff.
11. Buhl wrote a tutor (*Méthode de Trompette*, Paris: Janet et Coselle, 1825) for the natural and the stopped trumpet, but it does not include the slide trumpet.
12. Lyndesay G. Langwill, *An Index of Musical Wind-Instrument Makers* (Edinburgh: the author, 1980), p. 21.
13. H. Lavoix, *Histoire de l'instrumentation* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1978), p. 140.
14. The spelling of the name varies: Lavoix gives "Legrain," while Curt Sachs pointedly writes "Legeran—not Legram" (*Handbuch der Musikinstrumente* [Leipzig, 1920], p. 288). What is undoubtedly the correct spelling appears in E.F.F. Chladni's "Nachrichten von einigen (theils wirklichen, theils vielleicht nur angeblichen) neueren Erfindungen und Verbesserungen musikalischer Instrumente," *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* [Leipzig] no. 23 (June 6, 1821), col. 396. Chladni writes "Legram," and this is also the spelling used in the *Tabulature*. Victor Mahillon adopts the same spelling in *La Trompette, son histoire, sa théorie, sa construction* (Brussels, 1907), pp. 32 ff.
15. Johann Gottfried Haltenhoff, Hanau/Main. Cf. François Joseph Fétis, *Bibliographie universelle des musiciens et bibliographie générale de la musique* (Paris, 1862), 4: 209.
16. Lavoix, *Histoire*, pp. 139 ff. "En 1823 Legrain, chef de musique au 7^e regiment d'infanterie de la garde royale, reprit le système des coulisses à ressort d'Haltenhoff [...] pour fabriquer une trompette diatonique."
17. *Ibid.*, p. 140; Dauverné, *Méthode*, pp. xxi ff.
18. Lavoix, *Histoire*, p. 140, note 1. Concerning the spelling of the name, see note 14.
19. The same work, but with no indication of the author, is mentioned in *Bibliographie musicale de la France et de l'étranger ou répertoire général vocale et instrumentale ...* (Paris, 1822), p. 58.
20. Chladni, "Nachrichten," col. 396.
21. Pietro Lichtenthal, *Dizionario e Bibliographia della Musica*, vol. 2. (Milan, 1826), p. 258.
22. Lavoix, *Histoire*, p. 139.
23. "Paris. Born 1753. Pupil and Successor to Cormery at rue Port-foin 8." Langwill, *Index*, p. 147.
24. This statement is not entirely true. As shown in the *Tabulature*, there is one tone between g and c^b—a^b—which cannot be produced because the slide can lower the natural tones by three semitones and not four semitones.

25. Chladni, "Nachrichten," col. 396. "Legram [...] hat Trompeten verfertigen lassen, wo durch einen mit dem Daumen der rechten Hand zu bewegendem Schieber, der mit einer Feder versehen ist, (coulisse à ressort) leicht und schnell alle halben Töne der Tonleiter vom tiefsten g der Violine bis in das dreigestrichene c können hervorgebracht werden. Er wird nemlich, nachdem der Schieber ungefähr 2 Zoll, oder um 4 Zoll oder um 6 1/2 Zoll herausgezogen (und also dadurch die im Innern der Trompete longitudinalschwingende Luftsäule verlängert) wird, das ganze Tonsystem, welches der Trompete bey der ursprünglichen Lage des Schiebers zukommt, um einen halben Ton, oder um einen ganzen Ton oder auch um eine kleine Terz erniedrigt."

26. Lavoix, *Histoire*, p. 140. "Ces coulisses ne donnaient que le ton et le demi-ton; notre excellent trompettiste Dauverné, en inventant une position de plus leur fit donner une ton et-demi."

27. Anthony Baines, *Brass Instruments*, p. 184.

28. Chladni, "Nachrichten."

29. See note 20.

30. Buhl, *Méthode*, p. 6.

31. A. Gobert, *Méthode de Trompette...*, Paris: Halary, [1823].

32. Cam, *Méthode de Trompette...* Paris: Arnaud, [c. 1825].

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